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By David Berry

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PART 2



UP FRONT

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EDITORIAL

Vuepoint

A twit and Twitter

SCOTT HARRIS
// SCOTT@VUEWEEKLY.COM

Recent events in Iran have clearly illustrated that social media like Twitter and Facebook have the potential to play a much more significant role in society than finding out what member of the Muppets you are or keeping followers up to date on your morning cereal choices.

In the absence of significant media presence on the streets of Tehran, citizen journalists and bystanders with cellphone cameras have become an indispensable element in communicating the unfolding events to the world. Despite significant concerns about accuracy and reliability, the instantaneous nature of Twitter feeds and YouTube posts from the streets have shown in the most graphic way the visceral power of unedited, as-it-happens reporting and views, and pro-democracy Iranians have again demonstrated their incredible acumen in using online tools.

Back in Alberta, speaking of online tools, rookie Conservative MLA Doug Elniski has similarly offered a startlingly effective demonstration of how not to use social media. In two separate incidents in less than a week, Elniski managed first to offend the LGBT community through a series of poorly considered

tweets from the Pride parade (including the laughable report that fellow Tory Heather Klimchuk, who was practically booed off the stage during her speech, "was soundly applauded") and then women—or anyone who knows one—with sexist comments on his blog, including enlightened commentary such as, "don't give me that 'treated equal' stuff, if you want equal it comes in little packages at Starbucks."

Elniski's immediate apologies when his comments came to public light hardly make up for the fact that an individual who ostensibly represents the people of Alberta holds such opinions in the first place. Elniski admitted that "in hindsight, it was a stupid, inappropriate thing to put on the blog." In hindsight? What about in foresight?

The posts have been removed in an attempt at damage control, and Premier Stelmach will likely be admonishing other MLAs to be more selective in their heat-of-the-moment commentary, but Elniski's posts do offer an startling illustration on the regressive attitudes that are present within our current government, and go a long way in explaining how legislation like Bill 44 can receive unanimous Tory support. And in that, it would seem Twitter has again proven some usefulness. ▽

GRASDAL'S VUE



Letters

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

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GOT PRIVACY? NOT FOR LONG

I am very concerned about two new bills that the federal Conservative government has recently introduced. I feel that the *Investigative Powers for the 21st Century Act* and the *Technical Assistance for Law Enforcement in the 21st Century Act* give police too much unchecked surveillance power over the general public. These bills will open the door to the wholesale monitoring of the Internet traffic of all free Canadians by their Internet service providers (ISPs)—information which can then be summoned by police without any judicial oversight. Most alarmingly, these bills would also give police the power to activate tracking devices in cellphones and cars.

The bills would legislate that emails, web surfing history, and instant messages would all be stored indefinitely by ISPs. What is there to protect us from the power this gives police over our electronic privacy if not the courts? I feel that this is a very serious breach of the very nature of Canadian freedom. What is to become of our right to privacy?

In 2007, then-Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day said the Conservative government would not force ISPs to hand over personal information about their users to police without a warrant, but that is exactly what is now being proposed by the Conservative government.

I hope that, like me, everyone who is concerned about privacy will act to push for judicial oversight of this warrantless so-called "lawful access" program by writing your elected representatives and by writing letters to the editors of your favourite publications.

Blake Betteridge

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN ...

We are not having a summer election—that's six weeks of bad television and partisan editorials that will not disturb our vacations. Yay! Of course there are still serious issues to discuss: the near fatal death of manufacturing in Canada, a nuclear-medical global crisis and growing personal economic tragedies. Naturally, opposition parties are anxious to hold Prime Minister Harper to account ... at the very moment the public agrees. That means, instead of six weeks of election campaigning, we now have an entire summer of campaigning leading to a fall election. We have traded six weeks of rancor for six months of it.

Eugene Parks

THEY WERE WARNED

The Employment Insurance Account ended the 2007/08 fiscal year with

a \$56 952 606 000 surplus. Two billion dollars was established "as a contingency fund that will support relative premium rate stability" when a new system became law, rather than "a contingency reserve of \$10 - \$15 billion" called for by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries.

Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Diane Finley says Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff's plan for employment insurance is "irresponsible" because it would only result in huge increases in payroll taxes, adding that "payroll tax increase would kill jobs and small business."

Because of the job losses from the recession there will be an increase in EI spending this year. Had Flaherty and Finley followed advice given them by the former Chief Actuary of the EI program, by the Auditor General of Canada and by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries there would have been an adequate contingency fund set aside for the recession rather than threats of job-threatening tax increases.

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled the government can do what it willed with the EI payroll taxes paid by both employees and employers. It is unfortunate, now that recession has struck, they were, for whatever reasons, \$8 - \$13 billion short in planning for the inevitable.

Joe Huaglin

Tweeting about a revolution?

Vue talks to members of Edmonton's Iranian diaspora community about events in Iran

SCOTT HARRIS

// SCOTT@VUEWEEKLY.COM

It has been almost two weeks of commentators around the globe grasping for superlatives in their attempts to describe the scale and pace of the events unfolding on the streets of Tehran and other Iranian cities since the results of the disputed June 12 presidential elections, in which incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad officially received 63 percent of the popular vote, were first announced.

Images of what have been described as historic and unprecedented protests by hundreds of thousands of green-clad supporters of reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who charge that the election was fraudulent and are calling for an annulment of the results and a new election—calls which have been rejected by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei—have captured the attention of the world.

Driven by an incredible outpouring of citizen-driven media reporting by young Iranians using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to sidestep censorship by the Iranian authorities—efforts which New York University professor Clay Shirky, who specializes in new media, has described as "The big one ... the first revolution that has been catapulted onto a global stage and transformed by social media"—the protests and the violent reaction by the Iranian authorities has been delivered to computer screens with unheard-of immediacy.

Firsthand tweets and videos of police tear-gassing and beating protesters, as well as grisly footage of young Iranians being shot and killed on the streets of Tehran, most notably the tragic and now iconic death of 26-year-old Neda Agha-Soltan, have shocked millions around the world.

But nowhere have the protests—the largest demonstrations Iran has seen since the 1979 Islamic Revolution which drove the pro-western Shah from power—been more closely followed than within the three-million-strong Iranian diaspora community, including more than 100 000 who now live in Canada.

"It's frightening. We have relatives there, and I've sent Facebook messages to my cousin over and over again and I'm not getting replies, so it worries me," explains Maryam (who asked that her last name not be used), an Iranian-born Canadian and one of the organizers of a June 19 candlelight vigil for victims of the protests held at the University of Alberta. "You don't know what's going to happen next,



STREET FIGHTIN' IRAN >> Deadly clashes between police and protesters have occurred daily since the disputed election results // Farmanz Hoshemi

where this is going to go. In that sense it's frightening, but at the same time, I don't think that I've ever been more proud to be Iranian, because it's really amazing to have this many people stand up to this government and say enough is enough. So it's kind of a mixture of all these kinds of different emotions."

While Maryam has lived most of her life in Canada—her family left Iran in 1992 when she was just three, and she has since only returned for visits—for Hamid Soleymani, an adjunct professor of civil engineering at the U of A, the events of recent weeks bring back vivid memories of the last major upheaval in his native country, which led to the creation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"At that time in Iran I was a student and the university was the centre of the activities and the demonstrations at that time," recalls Soleymani. "So there are lots of similarities right now I can see between this movement that's happening right now after 30 years.

"People lived in a non-democratic and a very closed condition at that time and there was not any freedom to some extent, and people were protesting and they expected or they were interested in more democracy and freedom," he continues. "And maybe in the initial

stage of that process it was not that the Shah must go, but finally it went to that direction because the answer from the government was killing people at that time also, and lots of people were killed and anytime that [happened] there was more demonstration and more protest and it expanded and finally that government collapsed."

Despite significant differences, Soleymani says that the current demonstrations also have the potential to grow into something larger.

"Initially it was the election, but it was election that the people expected that they will go to a better situation, not a total change. They said that through the democratic voting or a fair democracy maybe we can push or move the same government in a way that is going to a better situation," he says. "However, what happened and the direction that moved, especially after the results they announced, brought more people together and it seems that the expectations are going higher and higher, are not staying on the same level that just questions just the vote. It seems that many people are asking more than that."

Like Maryam and Soleymani, 27-year-old U of A political science graduate student Siavash Saffari, whose family emi-

grated from Iran in 1997, has been glued to his computer since the election.

"There's a great sense of solidarity between people in the diaspora and the movement in Iran," Saffari says. "When I check my Facebook now all my Iranian friends are constantly posting stuff, stories of their family and friends given from first-person accounts from Iran."

He says that the current protests have shifted the dynamic of the sometimes-differing, and also extremely diverse, aspirations of those living within and outside of Iran.

"There's an interesting thing that's happening. Usually in the diaspora the people who are vocal are the opposition groups, whose expressed objective is to overthrow the regime. This time around, the activism in the diaspora is coming from people who are asking the same things that people in Iran are asking," he explains. "So if you look at their slogans or chants, it's pretty much exactly the same as the chants and slogans used in Iran. They're not asking for overthrow of the regime, they're asking, 'Where's my vote?' or 'Mousavi take back my vote.' This is the first time in the last 30 years that there's this connection between what the opposition is promoting and what the diaspora community is doing."

Saffari says that the profligate use of

social media by pro-democracy Iranians, which has been evolving for some time, partly explains this recent convergence.

"This phenomenon started with the growth of blogs over the last five years. Iranians are one of the biggest blogger communities on the Internet and that really helped to bridge this gap between the diaspora and the Iranian community," he says. "So one of the reasons maybe that you see this new phenomenon of people in the diaspora making the same demands as people in Iran is because over the last five, six years through blogs, through Facebook, through Twitter, people have been able to keep in touch with what's going on back home, to keep in touch with family and maybe to bridge those gaps that existed for a long time."

Saffari adds that given the vilification of Iran in the West, the Iranian diaspora in Canada have to walk a fine line in how they approach and talk with Canadians about events in Iran.

"On one hand there's solidarity with the movement in Iran. On the other hand, especially because in North America, in Canada, there is this negative image of Muslims, of Iranians—this static, backwards, theocratic system—because there's that distorted image, I feel that Iranians in the diaspora need to pay attention to that as well," he says. "So while we're supporting the movement in Iran we should also be careful that we're not reducing it to Ahmadinejad, Khamenei, a theocratic state, that people have been suppressed, that this is the first time that there's been a protest movement—no, this movement has been around for a long time. So we need to pay attention to that, we need to try and give an accurate picture of what's happening in Iran and talk about its complexity and the sophisticated civil society and the maturity of the movement."

Having an awareness of the complex nature of the Iranian political system and civil society is extremely important for Canadians who are watching events unfold, according to the U of A's Dr. Mojtaba Mahdavi, an assistant professor in the department of political science who teaches Middle Eastern and Islamic politics.

Mahdavi stresses that it's wrong to simply view the situation in Iran as another of the pro-Western revolutions that swept through Eastern Europe, pointing out that none of the candidates, including Mir-Hossein Mousavi, are fundamentally challenging the underlying political structure or the Islamic nature of Iran.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 >>



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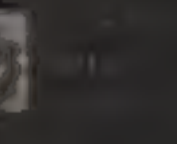
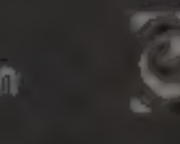
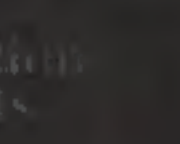
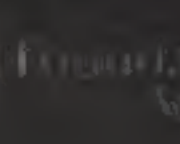
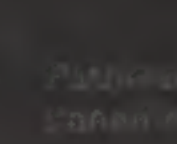
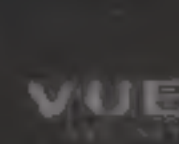
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Iraq: was it worth it?

By the end of this month, all US military forces will have withdrawn from Iraqi cities. Effectively, the US war in Iraq is over. Was it worth it?

There are two quite separate balance sheets of costs and benefits, one for Iraqis and the other for Americans. It's too early to give a final answer for the Iraqis, but for the United States the answer is definitely no.

No matter what happens in Iraq now, the Obama administration will not recommit US troops to a combat role in the country, so we can calculate approximately how much the Iraq adventure cost the United States with some confidence. The total cost will work out at well over a trillion dollars, if we count the long-term cost of caring for the veterans.

Random attacks may kill a few hundred more American soldiers in Iraq before all the troops go home, but the final death toll will certainly be less than five thousand. That is only one-tenth of the fatalities that US troops suffered in the Korean War or the Vietnam War, so the cost in lives was relatively low for Americans. But what did the United States gain in return for that investment?

Not a subservient ally, certainly. When Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki held a meeting with 300 top Iraqi military commanders early this month, an Amer-

ican general showed up to monitor the proceedings as usual. He was politely asked to leave. Washington's ability to influence decisions in Iraq is dwindling by the day.

Nor has the Middle East become a safer place, because Saddam Hussein's regime was no longer a threat to anybody except Iraqis long before the US invasion in 2003.

His foolish attacks on his neighbours, first on Iran in 1980 and then on Kuwait in 1990, culminated in a total and irreversible military defeat in the Gulf War in 1991.

The United Nations arms inspectors had completely dismantled Saddam's various projects to develop weapons of mass destruction by the mid-1990s, and the tight embargo that Iraq was under right down to the US invasion prevented it from rebuilding its armed forces after the 1991 defeat. He never again posed a military threat beyond his borders.

The current regime in Baghdad poses no threat to its neighbours either, but that changes nothing. There is a reservoir of experienced terrorist operatives in Iraq that did not exist before the US invasion, but apart from the minority of al-Qaeda extremists they have little interest in operating beyond the country's borders. And there will be no permanent US bases in Iraq.

So the balance sheet for the United

States is in the red, but not catastrophically so. The investment did not produce any worthwhile returns, but the negative consequences were not great either, and the investment was not all that big. More money has been thrown at failing American banks in the past eight months than was thrown at Iraq in six years.

What about the Iraqis, then? For them, the price in lives was far higher: up to two-thirds of a million deaths, by some estimates. They also suffered the almost complete collapse of an economy that was already severely damaged by Saddam's wars and the subsequent trade embargo. The level of violence has dropped sharply from its peak in 2006-'07, but the monthly death toll from political killings (which includes sectarian ones) is still higher than it was during the last decade of Saddam's rule.

For the 80 percent of Iraqis who speak Arabic, the greatest costs have been the destruction of the old secular society, which even under Saddam allowed women more freedom than most other Arab regimes, and the brutal ethnic cleansing that resulted in an almost complete physical separation of the Shia and Sunni populations. At least three million people are still afraid to return to their homes, and most never will.

That was a direct result of the American invasion, for without that the al-

Qaeda fanatics would never have gained such a foothold in the Sunni community. It was the senseless al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the Shias that unleashed the civil war of 2006-'07, which the Sunnis, being outnumbered three-to-one, were bound to lose. It will take at least a generation to heal this wound.

The other 20 percent of the population, the Kurds of northern Iraq, got a semi-independent state out of the invasion, though they still go along with the fiction of a united Iraq. This is not a stable arrangement, however, and the risk of an Arab-Kurdish war in Iraq over the ownership of the Kirkuk oilfields cannot be discounted.

On the other hand, Iraqis now have a more or less democratic system, with more or less free media. They have a government that is more corrupt and significantly less competent than the old Baathist regime, but will at least not waste the country's wealth on foreign wars. Given 10 or 15 years of good luck and high oil prices, Iraq could climb back to the level of prosperity it enjoyed in the 1970s.

So was it all worth it? There is no consensus on that even among the Iraqis themselves. We may know the answer by 2020. **V**

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in *Vue Weekly*.

DYER STRAIGHT
gwynne@vueweekly.com
Gwynne Dyer

TOP 10 RINGTONES



1 The Black Eyed Peas
Boom Boom Pow

2 Pitbull
I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)

3 Kid Cudi
Day 'N' Nite

4 Soulja Boy Tell'em
Kiss Me Thru The Phone

5 Eminem
Crack A Bottle feat. Dr. Dre and 50 Cent

6 Flo Rida
Right Round feat. Ke\$ha

7 Sean Kingston
Fire Burning

8 Jamie Foxx
Blame It feat. T-Pain

9 Eminem
We Made You

10 Jeremih
Birthday Sex

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Issues

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Learning from the present

Strong response to racist backlash against Six Nations in Ontario offers important lessons for Albertans

MACDONALD STAINSBY
// OILSANDSTRUTH.ORG

In the past week there have been two significant events that offer important lessons about the ongoing struggles of First Nations peoples in Canada. Sunday, June 21 was National Aboriginal Day, an ostensibly apolitical day set aside for the celebration of proud nations and history. Just two days later an explicitly political development took place in Cayuga, Ontario, where a racist militia with the espoused aim to "take back private property rights" held their first public meeting—and were met by protesters from numerous regions around the ongoing reclamation of the Haldimand Tract and the so-called Douglas Creek Estates housing development. That land belongs to the Six Nations of the Grand River, sovereign Mohawk Territory near the city of Hamilton, Ontario.

National Aboriginal Day events—often co-sponsored by various level of government, from federal on down—are held to establish pride, share culture and history. As a point of departure, the theme this year was "sharing our stories." On that note, a day to celebrate aboriginal history and culture is also a day for understanding, and understanding the racism that often greets struggles for self-determination when First Nations, Métis or Inuit stand up for their national rights is perhaps the most important lesson for non-native populations to learn. Nowhere is that lesson currently more apparent than in sovereign Mohawk Territory, where a racist backlash against the community of Six Nations is taking a much darker turn.

Since the beginning of the Six Nations struggle to reclaim their territory in February of 2006, the not-so-thinly-veiled racism of the population that lives within Caledonia (the closest non-First Nations community) has often come to the surface. A man named Gary McHale has incited people to hold anti-Mohawk rallies on more than one occasion, has run for parliamentary office in the province, garnering not-insignificant support, and has simultaneously wooed both "respected officials" and been endorsed by the most dangerous

of white supremacist organizations.

Under the rallying cry of "equality," McHale and his supporters have urged the RCMP and the Ontario Provincial Police to take violent measures to seize back territory and property reclaimed by Six Nations—territory that was long ago determined by the Canadian government to be now and forevermore Mohawk Territory. The same OPP forces have made well over 100 arrests since the start of the reclamation and continue to be provocative in case after case in their dealings with the community.

Having failed at convincing the authorities to attack Six Nations, Gary McHale's associate Doug Fleming issued a call in mid-June for the formation of what he calls the Caledonia Militia to "ensure that the criminal code is upheld" and promising to use "reasonable force to remove illegal trespassers."

Quoting from the emergency response call issued by activists in solidarity with Six Nations: "Doug Fleming (an associate of anti-native sovereignty activist Gary McHale) who was recently arrested for attempting to instigate a conflict with people at Six Nations by running onto the former Douglas Creek Estates waving a Canadian flag, has announced that he is now forming a 'militia' to directly confront 'native lawlessness' in Caledonia. According to Fleming, the militia would patrol areas in Caledonia by car and by foot wearing uniforms and communicating with radio equipment. If alerted to an instance of 'native lawlessness' the militia would then use 'reasonable force' to effect a citizen's arrest and would hold the native person until such time as the OPP arrived to take the 'prisoner' to jail."

It was only a few short months ago that the Aryan Guard, an Alberta-based white supremacist group, attempted to hold their second annual march in Calgary. Their "white pride" march came on the heels of an incident in which the nearby Siksika Reserve was invaded, with the offenders smashing windows and hurling (drunken) racist epithets at members of the First Nation. Both these incidents occurred in a province which continues to deny the proper rights of the sovereign

Cree nation of the Lubicon—with which the Alberta government refuses to negotiate despite the community still living on unceded territory, having no running water in their homes and watching as over \$13 billion in oil and gas revenues are taken from their traditional territory.

In the Cree, Métis and Dene community of Fort Chipewyan, the problem isn't the lack of running water, but rather whether or not the water is safe. The community has seen a statistically impossible increase in cancer rates over approximately the same time frame as the rapid escalation of the tar sands mining industry upstream from their fly-in-only home and have long demanded a baseline health study to determine whether or not the mining operations north of Fort McMurray are responsible for these deaths and diseases.

On a day like the recent National Aboriginal Day it is certainly positive that pride, history and culture be shared beyond the communities still so misunderstood by the majority of those who see themselves as Canadians. However, time might be better spent learning about the current state and struggles of First Nations peoples, especially when one considers that people like Doug Fleming can openly call public meetings to set up what amounts to a vigilante group in Ontario. For such people, it isn't the culture or history of the Mohawk that so incenses them, it is the willingness of First Nations peoples today to stand up for their rights, take back the land that continues to belong to them and to honour their history by standing in the present, not separated from the past.

We in Alberta can learn much from these realities, by opposing not only the racist militias, gangs and marches that happen here in our own province—as solidarity activists have done in Southern Ontario—but also by opposing the policies of our government, policies that deliberately create such racial divisions, and make the lives of First Nations simply another "cost of doing business." ▼

Macdonald Stainsby is a social justice activist, writer and coordinator of the website oilsandstruth.org.

PREVIEW // SHELL GUILTY!

Shell shocked

Landmark settlement only a partial victory

SAMANTHA POWER
// SAMANTHATATVUEWEEKLY.COM

In 1993 Nigerian activist Baribor Bera was arrested for participating in a protest against oil giant Shell's environmental destruction of his Ogoni people's lands. After months of detention and beatings at the hands of the Nigerian military, on November 10, 1995 Bera and eight other Ogoni activists were hanged by the regime.

After more than a decade of global grassroots organizing and legal action against Shell for its role in the murder of the "Ogoni 9," the company and its Nigerian subsidiary on June 8 reached a settlement which will see 10 plaintiffs, including some family members of the murdered activists, awarded \$15 million in compensation in one of the most disputed human rights cases against one of the one largest multinational companies in the world. But despite the landmark settlement, many believe the issue remains unresolved.

"My husband deserves justice. One day justice is possible," insists Victoria Bera, Baribor Bera's widow, who says she believes Shell and the Nigerian government still have much more to answer for. "This settlement was not for all. There is a lot of noise about it, but Shell did not come to the justice that they need."

Shell has had a presence in the minority Ogoni region of Nigeria—an area of more than 27 million people who are largely dependent on subsistence farming for their livelihoods—for over 50 years. Over the half-century of operations it is estimated that over 1.5 million tons of oil have been spilled in the region—the equivalent of about one Exxon Valdez oil spill a year.

In response the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) was formed in the early '90s in an attempt to force Shell to leave the region. Committed to non-violent action, MOSOP and its charismatic leader Ken Saro-Wiwa attracted the support of half a million Ogoni, and Shell took the extreme step of enlisting the help of the Nigerian military to control the protests to allow for the expansion of oil drilling in the region—operations which led to the murder of Saro-Wiwa, Bera and the other MOSOP activists.

Proof of Shell's complicity in the murders has been hotly disputed over the

years, but the company's interaction with the Nigerian military to keep up operations in the region is undisputed, leading in 1996 to the just-settled case being brought against Shell for human rights abuses, crimes against humanity, torture and arbitrary arrest.

While this month's settlement resolves the original lawsuit, it does not fully resolve the issue of Shell's impact in Nigeria. Earth Rights International, one of the groups who brought forward the lawsuit, stresses that larger issues, including minority land rights for the Ogoni people and restitution for the environmental impacts of Shell's operations in the region were not within the scope of the lawsuit.

Victoria Bera, along with two of the other victims' families, was also left out of the lawsuit because she was still in Africa when the plaintiffs came together to launch the lawsuit.

"We were not among the settlement and we were not invited to the courts," Bera explains. "We called the lawyer, and wrote letters to join the case but it was too late."

Beyond her family's personal quest for restitution, Bera, who will be speaking in Edmonton at an event to mark the settlement and discuss Shell's activities in Nigeria, stresses it's critical that both the government and Shell fully answer for their actions over the years.

"The Nigerian government played a part and both of them need to be brought to justice," she says. "The Ogoni people need to come together and work for justice. This settlement was not for all."

But despite the numerous outstanding issues, Jennie Green, an attorney with Center for Constitutional Rights, another group involved in bringing the case forward, says the settlement is still a major victory and a step forward in holding corporations to account.

"This was one of the first cases to charge a multinational corporation with human rights violations, and this case confirms that multinational corporations can no longer act with impunity," she says. ▼

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CITY // MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Food fight

Hundreds fill City Hall to push for greater local food security

SCOTT HARRIS

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More than 500 people packed a June 23 public hearing on the city's proposed new Municipal Development Plan, filling council chambers and an overflow area set up to accommodate them in a show of support for a plan which would see the city take steps to preserve its dwindling urban agricultural land.

Four speakers from the Greater Edmonton Alliance, a coalition of some 30 community organizations, faith groups, unions and small businesses which organized the evening turnout, made presentations to city council, encouraging councillors to "show leadership" in the capital region by integrating concerns about local food security into future decisions about converting the city's remaining agricultural land in the northeast, southwest and southeast of the city to other uses.

Monique Nutter, the co-chair of GEA's local food team and one of the speakers at the hearing, told council that preserving some of the prime farmland in the city—land which boasts some of the highest productive capacity in the province—is a key foundation for creating a local food economy in the face of growing public concerns about the unsustainability of the current global food system.

While Nutter said that the group is not opposed to all development on the city's

remaining agricultural land, there needs to be a real consultation between developers who want to see areas such as the 4000 hectares in the city's northeast developed as quickly as possible and those who think the city needs to keep the land for food production.

"What the precise mix is, we're not sure," she said, adding that part of the problem is that the city simply doesn't know how much agricultural land it has available or the value of that land in food production. To address this problem Nutter proposed an amendment to the MDP to develop an agricultural areas plan which would create an inventory of local productive lands to help inform future land-use decisions. She also encouraged council to act as a "champion" in the creation of a regional food security system through the 25-municipality Capital Region Board.

The draft Municipal Development Plan, entitled "The Way We Grow," is the overarching plan for the city's growth, development and land use over the next 30 years, a period in which the population of Edmonton is expected to grow by an estimated 400 000 people. It is being developed by the city in conjunction with a similar plan for transportation, "The Way We Move."

While the MDP does address the issue of food security, the latest draft focuses on neighbourhood level approaches,

such as home and community gardens, an approach which GEA Lead Organizer Michael Walters said is shortsighted.

"They've done a lot of good things, but the primary thing is that they've disconnected land from food security," Walters told *Vue*. "So they've taken out the term 'ensure access to local food through a secure land supply.' They're arguing that because we can't do it all—and they're right, we can't feed ourselves entirely with the land that we have—that we shouldn't really worry about doing any. We're saying that food security is enhanced because you use the local land you have as a foundation for a local food economy."

Walters argues that along with growth and transportation, the city also needs an overarching plan for enhancing food security in the coming decades, and the group presented its vision, "The Way We Eat" to council. The document suggests that developing a local food economy could have a \$2 billion economic impact in the region, at the same time making it more self-sufficient in food production.

Walters said that while any realistic food security plan must be regional, Edmonton needs to lead the process.

"The city particularly in the region has the most on the line because it's got the most mouths to feed," he said. "We need to ante up, the city needs to ante up. It needs to save some of its own land to have any credibility in the region." ▽

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Rather, he explains, the current crisis stems in part from a power struggle at the state level between two political factions within the Islamic Republic of Iran. One is a new generation of what he calls Iran's neo-cons: the conservative, theocratic and militaristic leaders who are currently in power, including Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The other is a loose, broad coalition of reformists of various stripes, which includes everyone from former-president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who differ significantly on the economic and cultural reforms they would like to see.

"I just want to underline the fact that all these people are within the establishment," he says. "At this point there is no such things as a 'velvet' or 'colour' revolution as we had in the post-Soviet regime, and there is no actual revolution at this point. All the factions of the reformists are loyal to the system and they simply want to cancel the election results, they don't want to see the collapse of the whole system."

Mahdavi says there is "evidence there was electoral fraud and the election was rigged," likely for a multitude of reasons, some of which are merely speculative.

"What are the issues at hand? This power struggle, different economic interests, consolidation of Ayatollah Khamenei's power, his succession and perhaps replacing the Islamic Republic with an Islamic government, basically undermining the republican factor of the Islamic Republic—although the last two are unconfirmed and we have to see what will happen. So based on this view, what happened on June 12 was pre-planned, it was some sort of wide, soft coup and they really wanted to avoid any kind of meaningful victory for the reformists."

Mahdavi agrees with some observers that the unfolding crisis does have the potential to undermine faith in the entire system in the long term.

"Given what's happening, the main question is: is the Islamic Republic of Iran reformable or not? Can we trust elections in the future? Can we bring the people in four years and convince them to vote or not? And this is a very critical moment for the state."

Mahdavi stresses that a large-scale social movement for democracy is not new in

Iran, with similar movements dating back more than a century, but that what is happening now in Iran is unprecedented in the period since the 1979 revolution.

"The fact is what's happening now is unique and is not unique. It's not unique because there's a hundred year precedent, and it is unique because this is the first time in post-revolutionary politics you have such a huge number of people demonstrating publicly for democracy," he says. "So from this perspective you can say people are ahead of the reformists—they really want more than simply canceling electoral results, but at this point I guess it's fair to say that given the structural constraints, institutional constraints and so many other factors the main slogan of the people on the streets is cancel the election, they don't really want to overthrow the system at this point."

"In other words there is no revolution at this point, what there is is a grassroots, authentic social movement. And of course it's because of the complexity of Iranian society and different groups have different demands. Social justice, economic development, democracy and human rights are all great values, and different sections of society want different parts of it."

How the situation will be resolved is hard to say, but Mahdavi says that given the polycentric nature of power in Iran, hardliners like Ahmadinejad are unlikely to be able to completely isolate the reformists, but he does think it's likely the establishment will be able to buy itself the time necessary for the protests to dwindle, allowing it to pressure reformists behind the scenes and hold on to power for another four years.

"But even if they can do this, this Islamic Republic is going to be different from the pre-June 12 Islamic Republic. At the state level you have a clear coalition of the military and the leader. At the societal level it's going to suffer from a serious legitimacy crisis, and this is so critical," he says. "We remember in the past, during the post-1953 coup—and that coup was supported by the United States and Great Britain—the Shah's regime never ever achieved legitimacy in the eyes of the people and it led to the overthrow of the regime. And now if the Islamic Republic cannot convince the people [of its legitimacy] the future perhaps would be, if not exactly similar to what happened to the post-1953 Shah regime, perhaps have some kinds of similarities." ▽

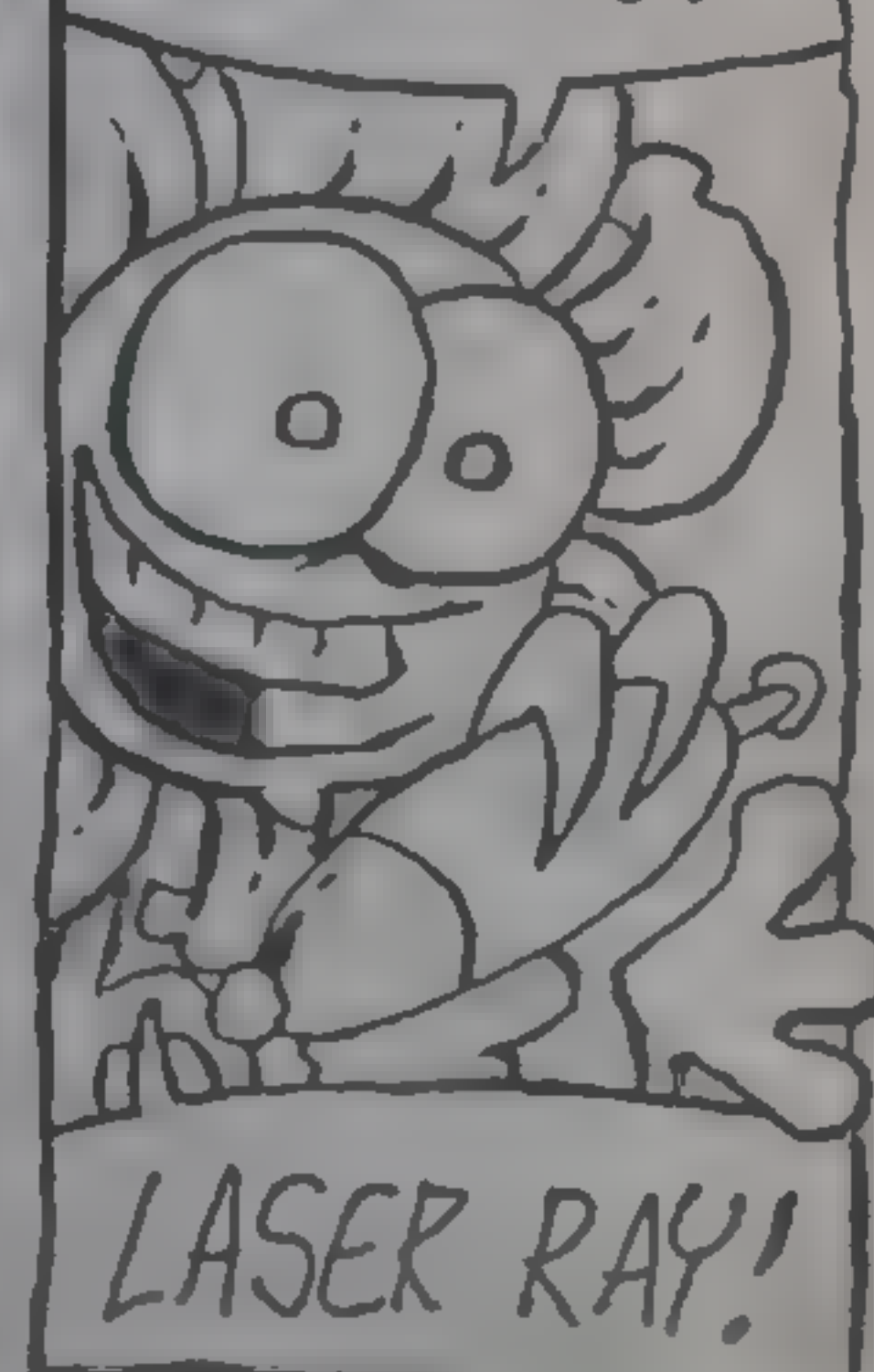
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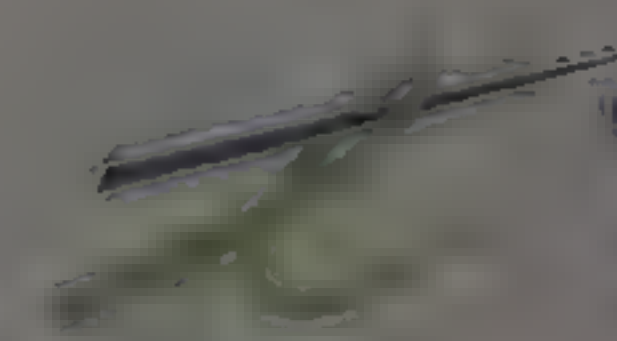
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If I had a hammer

Summer solstice! Longest day, shortest night — terrible screen-glare conditions; unless you foil over your windows or make a lightproof fort out of blankets and chairs, the Earth's own orbital mechanics conspire against any kind of serious videogame playing. But will finds its ways, and while all across the hemisphere other people were barbecuing, strolling, makin' out on creeksides or prancing blissfully around bonfires in neo-pagan celebration of the ascendancy of the Sacred Sun Cow or whatever, I holed up in my well-shadowed office-nest with a copy of *Red Faction: Guerrilla*, demolishing Martian factories with a sledgehammer.

This isn't really a review of *Guerrilla*; I don't think I've actually "played" the "game" enough to fully comment. See, *Guerrilla* wastes no time laying out for you its scenario, and the core of its appeal: you're a

disgruntled mining engineer on Mars, a corporate semi-slave colony in the throes of a brutal police crackdown, and the only way to get the tyrannical boot of Earth off the workers' collective neck is to destroy the living fuck out of all their installations. Here's your hammer, kid, and a goodie-bag filled with explosives; go out and literally smash the state. After the first time you take down a hundred-foot cooling tower by hand, things like missions and objectives and storylines sort of take a back seat to freeform monkeywrenching.

One of the great Grails of gaming is the "fully destructible environment," a gamespace where things like rocket launchers do to buildings and walls what they do to enemies and such. It's natural for gamers to want this—as the resolution and fidelity of games' virtual spaces increase, it seems more and more "fake" when, say, you toss

a grenade into an office occupied by fascist stormtroopers, blowing them all to hell, and, like, the coffee-maker's still sitting on the countertop—or when you're carrying enough ordnance to face down a tank division and you can't get past a flimsy wooden door because you haven't found the right keycard. Since its PlayStation 2 debut eight years ago, the *Red Faction* series and its "Geo-Mod" technology has been leading the way toward making this right: you're a miner, the game says; go right ahead and freakin' mine.

From a level-design perspective, putting this kind of barrier-busting power in the hands of players raises a bit of a problem: If, given enough boom, the player can brute-force their way through anything, how do we then control their experience—how can we keep them colouring within the lines without building a frustrating rat-maze of arbitrarily indestructible fences? *Guerrilla* avoids (mostly, I think) this problem by making wreckin' shit not just a method by which an objective may be achieved but the objective itself. It inverts the play ecology, rather than presenting an interior envi-

ronment of fragile material bounded by impervious walls, it offers vulnerable targets surrounded by open space — and guys with guns. Dealing with vigilant gunsels can be a challenge, sure, but rarely does a physical barrier piss you off: If it's standing in your way, you can knock it down.

Ah, the knocking-down. It's pure anarchic joy, right from the beginning. *Guerrilla* doesn't force you to piss about for hours before you get some satisfying wrecking gear, right from the beginning, you're given the most satisfying weapon/tool in the game: that sweet sledgehammer. With one swing, boom—there goes a section of wall. Boom—there goes a structural support. Boom, boom, boom—the scream of twisted metal as the whole building collapses. There is such an intimacy, an intensely pleasant physical connection to this hands-on demolition. Like I said, I haven't really done much in the way of structured missions in the five or six hours I've been playing; it's been enough just to run around swinging my hammer at everything in my path, cackling with glee as wreckage tumbles around me. And even kicking it

freeform like this, I'm making some kind of progress: the miners see me going to town, doing my Mighty-Thor-on-PCP routine, and they're inspired to do likewise. I'm getting a rep, inciting direct action by example.

Really, the only disappointment I've so far felt with *Guerrilla* came after I shut the game off and went to bed. Of course I had *Red Faction* dreams; I knew I would, after that much endorphin-pumping intensity, and I was quite looking forward to a night of cathartic hammer-swinging in the Realms of Sleep. But it didn't turn out like I'd hoped: sure, I dreamed I was a space-miner, had the hammer and everything, but in the dream I was stuck at the bottom of a thousand-foot cliff. Spent the first half of my dreamtime dicking around at the cliff-base, arguing with my Junior High math teacher over how best to proceed, and the other half laboriously hacking a stairway into the stone until I got halfway up and stumbled off the edge, plummeting awake.

Just goes to show, I guess: as freeform and open-world as they make it, no amount of "escapism" is going to free you from your own crazy head. **V**

ALT HEALTH >> NEWSWEEK BIAS

Really crazy talk

A recent *Newsweek* piece titled "Crazy Talk" missed the mark of balanced and credible reporting to become a condescending attack on the credibility of Oprah Winfrey, some guests she hosted earlier this year, and alternative medicine in general. Derogatorily describing the show with Suzanne Somers as "a perfect hour of tabloid television," the writers produced something that might have been a public relations piece written by the pharmaceutical industry, which is probably not all that far from reality.

The truth is that *Newsweek*, like so many media outlets, has close ties with the pharmaceutical industry. In 2001, the magazine ran a special health edition that conferred sponsorship for the issue entirely on the pharmaceutical lobby. It has cosponsored conferences with the drug lobby. Its reporting has been used as direct-mail lobbying by the industry and an industry-funded front group called the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, or PhRMA. And Pat Wingert, one of the authors of the article, is anything but unbiased—he's written much on the benefits of starting hormone replacement early, and is coauthor of *The Complete Guide to Menopause*.

I don't watch *Oprah*, but to say her show is deserving of the adjective "seamy" for hosting advocates of alternative medicine and to refer to those people as "pop-science artists" appears to be little more than a last gasp attempt at defending a system of medicine that is failing us. Dr. Christiane Northrup, Dartmouth-educated ob-gyn, also criticized in the article, is hardly a quack for opposing Gardasil (even the FDA has strengthened its warning on the vaccine), nor for recognizing the mind-body connection doctors tend to overlook (it's a connection solidly supported by science.)

Making the assumption that the medical establishment recommends only what is safe and in our best interests, and that alternative approaches to health are foolhardy and pseudoscientific, the writers overlook the fact that much medical practice is in fact years behind what the science supports. As Dr. David Newman,

the emergency room physician, clinical researcher and Columbia University teacher of medicine makes abundantly clear in his book *Hippocrates' Shadow*, much of what we assume to be both safe and effective in medical practice is sometimes neither.

The writers of "Crazy Talk" dismissively refer to bio-identical hormones in quotation marks, implying there's no such thing. They claim that what passes for bio-identical is no different and no safer than are synthetic hormones, a claim not even remotely true—their chemical structure and actions in the body are quite different. Bio-identical means chemically identical to the hormones produced in our bodies—and it means they're not patentable as drugs. The FDA knows of no adverse effects associated with bio-identical hormones properly used, something not true of their synthetic counterparts.

Synthetic counterparts to our hormones on the other hand present a challenge to our bodies. We have trouble metabolizing them. They stress our livers, increase our nutritional needs and their use is strongly correlated with high homocysteine levels and inflammation. They increase our risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, dementia, diabetes, osteoporosis and cancer.

To refer to alternative approaches as "hogwash" having an "aura of being scientific" is, though condescending and absolutely untrue, a highly effective tactic for discrediting ideas that are a threat to the orthodoxy. The medical orthodoxy, aware of its own damaged credibility, wants the thousands of people finding help with alternative medicine to go away. The only way it will achieve that goal is to disparage them, to dismiss alternative medicine as dangerous and foolish mumbo-jumbo even when it is soundly grounded in good science.

As German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer once said, "All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident." **V**



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ORIGINAL FARE // JESSIE RADIES

Are you original?

Jessie Radies keeps the emphasis on community

MIKE ANGUS

Original Fare is a group of locally owned, independent restaurants that work collaboratively."

Jessie Radies entertains my request for her 15-second sales pitch, though somewhat mantra-like. I can't blame her though; opening weekend at downtown's 104th Street Farmers' Market saw her repeating that line for the hordes of shoppers, local food producers and fellow restaurateurs who came by Original Fare's booth to bask in what is quickly becoming a weekly ritual for local foodies.

With 25 years of experience in the Alberta food industry, Radies replies authoritatively to every question I throw at her. She spent 15 years working for "large, multinational corporate restaurants," until she and her husband opened the Blue Pear together 10 years ago. With the welcome freedom and reward of self-employment came the realization, however, that running a small, local, independent restaurant was nothing like working for Pepsico. "Costs were completely different for independent restaurants than they were for chains and franchises ... All of the benefits were slowly slipping out of reach financially," Radies laments. "I looked around and I knew that there were lots of restaurants that were doing interesting things, that were in exactly the same boat I was in. I tried to find a way where we could work together without compromising our independence, but work for everyone's benefit ... maybe by working together, we could actually grow



KEEPIN' IT REAL >> And keepin' it original // Supplied

the market for independent restaurants?

"But [working with competitors] is not how we do things in our industry," she explains. When she started approaching competitors of the same size and market, they were understandably apprehensive.

"At first they were receptive, but they were very leery of working with their competitors. We had to figure out what common needs we had—what could we do collectively that we couldn't do individually—and then we just had to give it time."

Five years and 10 member restaurants later, Original Fare has become a framework for success and a network for local, independent restaurants whose goals are consistent with Original Fare's core values: striving for culinary excellence and authenticity, encouraging social responsibility, working together, supporting regional cuisines and products, and creating awareness. Listening to Radies, the successes are obvious.

"We went from a very loosely knit group

of people doing ads, to now we have employee meal and benefit programs, we have a gift-card and loyalty program, we are bound by core values, and we actually help each other out, which is really, really cool when I stand back and think about where we were when we started. Within the Original Fare restaurants, if you need help, there's somebody you can call, whether I need a locksmith or how to run a bonus program for my chef. When we get together for meetings, there's hundreds of years of [collective] experience around the table. There's still friendly competition, and we all want to see each other do well."

This competitive collectivism not only benefited local restaurants, but also soon caught on with independent businesses in other industries, like hair salons, clothing stores and bookshops. It was as if a light came on for Radies.

"It's made my business so much more financially sustainable. I started to realize that in Edmonton, we needed this for all of the independent businesses, because when you start to understand some of our local economy issues, it's amazing the role that independent business plays in that. I won't say it's ignored, but I don't think local independent businesses are given their due as a tool to generate more economic activity, to increase the diversity of our region, to address some of our social issues, and they could really be effective at revolutionizing our community."

This realization led Radies to start Keep Edmonton Original, an organization of almost 100 independent businesses of every stripe. As we talk more, the passion that Radies shows for food starts to translate into something much more far-reaching. It begins to explain how she engages with the social, political and economic infrastructure of this city. While Original Fare's website boldly states, "Our restaurants are located here because this is our home, not

simply a target market," Radies is much more diplomatic.

"I want to live in an interesting city, I want to live in a vibrant city, I want to live in a prosperous city, and I think local business plays a critical role in that. So I'm doing what I can do to help support that, and I get all kinds of benefits from it. When I talk to a business owner about Original Fare, or Keep Edmonton Original, they usually show up in my restaurant to eat within a week or two. You start building relationships, and it really, really enhances my business."

"I think urban people are starved for [community], and I think food is an easy thing to gather around. And I think we're starting to understand that we need that kind of connection. We want that. For a lot of us, whether we're removed from our families by distance or lifestyle, it's nice to know that you've got colleagues or neighbours or small business owners that [are] in it together."

With all the successes of managing a restaurant and heading up Original Fare, Radies' proudest achievements are still the longevity of her marriage and raising her kids. Of parenting, she is realistic and candid. "You can't miss your kid's childhood because you're busy implementing a new marketing campaign. I think any self-employed parent struggles with that."

The challenges ahead, while unpredictable, show signs of promise. "I think Original Fare will continue to grow. We've had restaurants from BC and Ontario wanting to join. I've seen a shift in awareness around local food, and that, to me, is so exciting," Radies enthuses. "People at the restaurant have started to ask me where my product comes from. That's awesome. The other thing is people are starting to talk about local business, which is really cool, because even three years ago local business owners didn't understand why local business was so important." V

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The heat is on

Poire William can take the edge off summer

Summer cocktails should be light and cold and refreshing. A lot of summer drinks are sweet and fruity, and there's nothing wrong with that, but things can get too sweet and veer into syrupy affairs that do nothing to quench thirst or counteract the heat. One way to avoid crushing sugar trips is to keep the fruity flavours in the alcohol itself so that you can mitigate it when mixing. Poire William, pear-flavoured brandy made mostly in France and Switzerland, is excellent for this kind of treatment.

Brandy is made by distilling wine into something heavier and stronger, and it's no different for pear brandy. There are two ways that Poire William is made. It can be distilled from the

pears themselves, or, as is often the case, pears can be used as flavouring in an already-made product. You can occasionally see bottles of Poire Williams with a whole pear in them. In this case, the pears were grown inside the bottle, and the bottle was then filled with brandy that has since become steeped in pear flavour. Poire William is named after the pear the French call Williams' Bon Chrétien. This is the same as the North American Bartlett, which is what makes its smell so familiar. If you open a bottle of Poire William and breathe deeply, all you will smell is pear. There's no hint of alcohol, no notes of caramel or oakiness or any-

thing else. It's just beautiful, luscious, ripe pear.

On first smell, you might be tempted to just tilt the bottle straight into your mouth. Although this might not be the worst way to drink Poire William, I suggest resisting. The alcohol itself tastes sweet and pearlike, but its flavour is richer and heavier than its scent suggests. If you'd like to drink it straight (and it does make a great after-dinner sipper), chill it or serve it over ice in small glasses. It's worth taking the twenty minutes to slowly sip it.

It doesn't take much to mix a cocktail with Poire William. Its alcohol content, somewhere around 30 percent, is lower than vodka or gin, but it's high enough to stand alone in a drink. When mixed with juice or soda water it's all sweetness and light, and its pear aroma is refreshing instead of heavy. Try it in a variation on the classic cocktail Jack Rose, which is usually made with apple liqueur, or try adding soda to it

with a bit of lime to add some tang to make a Poire Fizz.

If you're looking for some summer refreshment, stay away from sweet-sweet mixers. And stop complaining about the heat. We've only got two months of it left. **V**

RECIPES

POIRE FIZZ

This drink uses lemon juice to cut the sweetness of the combination of Poire William and grenadine. The grenadine (don't use too much!) adds a lovely rosy glow.

1 1/2 oz Poire William
1/2 oz lemon juice
1 teaspoon grenadine

Combine all ingredients in an ice-filled cocktail shaker, shake, then strain into a chilled cocktail glass. **V**



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BACK OF THE BUS BUDDY >> Mornings are tough at Highlevel.

JAN HOSTYN

If you happen to find yourself on 109 Street and the south end of the High Level Bridge on any given Saturday or Sunday morning, chances are you'll see a lineup—usually a long one. This interesting phenomenon typically makes its first appearance around 8:50 am and nothing seems to deter it, not even the invigorating minus-30 temperatures we're occasionally blessed with. It starts at the locked outer door of the Highlevel Diner and weaves its way down the sidewalk, flanking the patio and

sometimes even encroaching on The Sugar Bowl's domain.

At exactly 9 am, or a few seconds earlier on a good day, that locked door will suddenly swing open and hordes of hungry diners will file through. They'll make their way down the narrow hallway, past the day-old muffin and cinnamon bun nook and into the quaint and cozy dining room. A rush to claim favourite tables will ensue and then steaming coffee pots, servers in tow, will begin making their endless rounds—breakfast/brunch at The Highlevel Diner has begun.

I detest line-ups, but they also intrigue me. If other people, lots of

other people, are willing to endure this school-like ritual, there has to be something worthy at the end of it—doesn't there?

That's how my family and I found ourselves waiting in yet another line, surrounded by bleary eyes and rumbling stomachs, early one Sunday morning—my curiosity simply couldn't resist. It was actually quite the lovely morning; not even our flip-flop clad feet had cause to complain. The ever-increasing line-up proved to be entertaining enough in itself, but a couple of strategically-placed newspaper boxes rescued the I-can't-function-without-a-jolt-of-caffeine contingent from having to make any attempt at being social.

The doors opened and the lineup filed inside—relatively politely, too. A quick flurry ensued while hungry diners staked out their favourite tables, or, if they happened to be among the tardy creatures at the back of the line, just a table. On the morning we were treated to this little tradition, everyone in line actually got a table, but barely. The poor souls with unfortunate timing who descended on the café just after 9 weren't so lucky. They faced a good 45-minute wait since no one seated at one of the coveted tables had even ordered breakfast yet, let alone finished devouring it.

We sat ourselves at a lovely table by the window and, despite the cozy appearance from all the wooden furniture and brown walls surrounding us, there was a decided nip in the air.

Our very efficient waiter was visiting all the tables that had descended on him en masse, delivering menus and toting the highly-sought-after coffee pot. My husband sighed appreciatively after his mug was filled (coffee is \$2.25). I ordered my obligatory latté—this particular morning called for a large (\$4.95)—and my girls each decided a hot chocolate

was in order (\$3.95 each).

The menu, while not large, seemed to cover all the breakfast-y bases. It also did a good job of appealing to both the health-conscious and the not-so-health-conscious. There was even a breakfast special—a decadent-sounding crème brûlée French toast with pork sausages.

While we pondered exactly what our stomachs happened to be craving that morning, our drinks arrived with a flourish. A huge blue bowl, topped with steamed milk and dusted with cocoa, was placed in front of me. Impressive, but it was totally outshone by the billowy mounds of chocolate whipped cream that topped the girls' hot chocolates. Even fast spoon work could do nothing to contain its looming escape.

After the whipped cream was delightfully dealt with and my husband's mug magically refilled itself, we ordered: blueberry pancakes with fresh fruit (\$8.95), two cinnamon buns (\$3.50 each) and multigrain cereal (\$6.50) with a banana on the side (\$1.50).

While we waited, our voices mingled with other voices, the clanking of forks on plates and the odd whir of the blender. As noisy and hectic as the pace of the café was, it was oddly comfortable and relaxing. Works of local artists dotted the walls, adding a unique dimension to the atmosphere.

Breakfast arrived quickly. First came two small glass plates overflowing with huge, fluffy, cinnamon buns and a larger plate containing the multigrain cereal, the sliced banana and a little pot of brown sugar. It was quickly followed by a platter sporting three of the biggest pancakes I have ever encountered and three bottles of syrup; blueberry, strawberry and the requisite maple.

The cinnamon buns were so humongous they really should have been called loaves. Goopy on the bottom, sugary on the top and cinnamon-y throughout, they were a resounding success. A little bowl overflowing with butter went untouched—they were rich and decadent enough on their own—but it, along with the unlimited syrup and coffee, was a

thoughtful touch.

My multigrain cereal, swimming in skim milk and doctored up with a smattering of brown sugar and sweet banana slices, was hearty and healthy. The individual grains were still slightly firm and the soft banana provided a nice contrast.

None of us could get over the sheer size of the pancakes, however, and since there were more than enough to go around, I snuck more forkfuls than I care to admit. Pockets of juicy blueberries lay hidden inside, making every bite an adventure, and their fluffy texture did an admirable job of soaking up the sweet syrup. A small bowl with watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, pineapple, grapes and a few pieces of apple and orange seemed overwhelmed by the pancakes, but its freshness was appreciated.

We all tried valiantly, but I was the only one who managed to return an empty plate to the kitchen.

As we made our way past the queue of still-rumbling stomachs, we decided that breakfast at the Highlevel Diner was a very relaxing way to start our Sunday, line-up and all. And if you happen to be allergic to line-ups, go during the week. Evidently tables aren't quite so hard to come by then. **V**

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DISH WEEKLY

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Sister syrah

Glass in hand, resident wino bids so long

In the interests of accuracy, I looked up a Mark Twain quote I wanted to use to say goodbye. I had thought he said, "Reports of my demise are greatly exaggerated," though he actually used the term "death." Too bad, the former fits better with one of my thoughts for this week. There are rumours of my departure from this wine gig, which are sort of true. I will be writing significantly less, focusing more on periodic wine features that will come more from inspiration than necessity. In my stead, *Vue Weekly* has brought in a pair of new winos to offer you grape-fed stories and adventures. I would like to welcome Mike Angus and Jenn Fulford to the fold and wish each of them well.

Part of my departure comes from a decreasing amount of time to focus on the necessary aspects of writing and tasting wine. This past weekend, I took my family camping. I had hoped to spend some time in the evenings tasting and writing a few of my parting wine thoughts. I found, however, that after chasing a couple rugrats around, I passed out only moments after they fell asleep. I did manage a couple sips during their afternoon naps, though.

The first I tasted was the 2008 Tinhorn Creek Gewurztraminer (\$16.50).

This clean, very lightly coloured wine offered a crisp, refreshing nose. I found the juice to be rather well-structured and heavier than most Gewurzs I have tasted before. Full at the front of the palate and offering loads of body, I found it lacked a bit in fruit. Nevertheless, it was a pleasant bottle of wine.

Next, I ventured to a new release from La Frenz, their Syrah Rosé 2008 \$30. First, I found it odd that the wine-makers would call it a Syrah given they are ex-pat Australians. Australians are the main users of the word Shiraz to describe the same grape as Syrah. This is a matter of interest, though, and has nothing to do with the wine.

I have never professed to be a particularly good judge of Rosé wines, as I have found few that inspired me but, as a fan of La Frenz, I hoped for the best. I found this off-orange-coloured juice offered a pleasant nose that was unfortunately overwhelmed by nearby campfires. Its flavours were well supported by great residual sugars that provided a solid backbone to the wine. The flavours of fruit were apparent but hardly overwhelming. It seems that this is good wine that has yet to truly establish itself.

See you in the near future!



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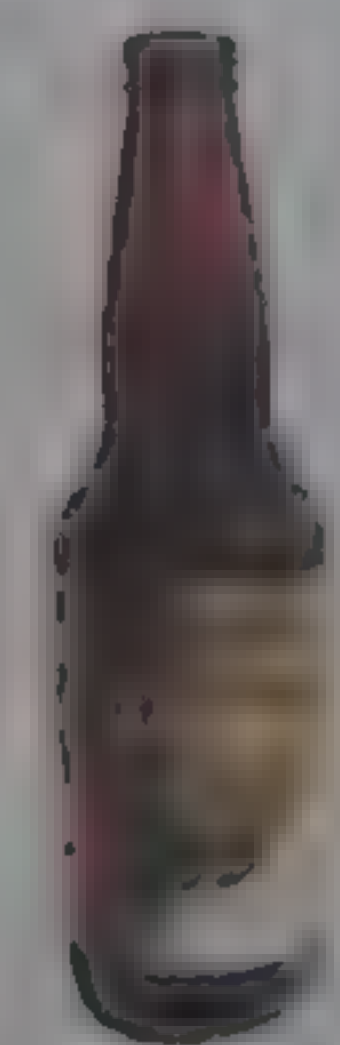
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Arts Reviews

Fawnda Mithrush recaps the Sterlings, and checks out the best that the Feats Festival of Dance has to offer.

DANCE // FEATS FESTIVAL OF DANCE

Feats, don't fail me

Feats Festival of Dance returns to get Edmonton moving



GOREY TALES >> Mile Zero presents a piece inspired by Edward Gorey at the Feats Festival of Dance. *21+ A.V.*

FAWENDA MITHRUSH
FAWENDA@VUE

With the kiddies out of school, the sun shining and the fountains at the Legislature turned on (finally), it's time to get a move on. And guess what? Here in the thick of festival season, there's one fest that insists you do just that.

Feats Festival of Dance, now in its eighth year, is a celebration of the diversity of dance in Edmonton, says Festival Director Bobbi Westman, and she certainly doesn't mind all the other summer events competing for audiences at the same time.

"Although it's a very busy season, it's exciting to know that you live in a city that celebrates so much, where you can pick and choose between so much of what you want to see," she says. "You know you've moved into a bigger city setting when you have that ability."

Each year, Feats offers up a smorg of mainstage performances, work-

shops and free events around town that promote dance awareness. "The mandate is to look at a big cross-section of dance, looking at everything from the traditional folk arts of dance to concert series of dance to social dance and contemporary dance as well," says Westman. "This year the focus is on how dance partners with other things, whether that partnering is with other mediums, other dance styles, or other organizations. Every year we try to partner with an individual or small company that would like to develop some work, whether it's for an upcoming season or they want to try something new."

This year, that partnership is with Mile Zero Dance. Gerry Morita approached the Alberta Dance Alliance with a proposal to explore new media for *Public Domain*, a show MZD will include in their upcoming season.

"They're an excellent group that have been working very hard, and next year

is their anniversary. With this we're able to provide a venue and some marketing for them for them to move forward," says Westman. "It's important to be able to create without worrying about the telephone ringing and not have all those other distractions."

Morita, though a little swamped with the myriad other events going on, is excited to share the innovations of the new piece. Using the macabre art of Edward Gorey as a starting point, *Public Domain* experiments with soundscapes manipulated by the dancers themselves.

"We're really delving into Edward's Gorey's art as source material," Morita explains. "We like the contrast and the mystery of it all. He really creates

"In Edmonton it differs quite widely because we have a lot of freedom here."

these scenarios where something huge has just happened, but you're not quite sure what. We really wanted to create that 'what.'"

Working with electro-acoustic musician Shawn Pinchbeck, the soundtrack of the piece will be created by dancers as they move.

"We're hoping to get into using a computer interface, so that when the dancers move into a certain space it triggers a sound," says Morita, noting that there's a lot of room for experimentation like this in the local dance community. "You find in Toronto the work tends to be more form-conscious. In Montréal the work is very emotive," she says. "In Edmonton it differs quite widely because we have a lot of freedom here. It's not as defined, we don't have a producer telling us what Edmonton style is; it's not like that here." **V**

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PREVUE // CRUMBS

Improved improv

Winnipeg duo Crumbs don't script their shows, it just seems that way



FROM THE HORSE'S HEAD >> Steve Sim and Lee White are so good you might think they wrote it down. *// Supplied*

FAWENDA MITHRUSH

FAWENDA@VUEWEEKLY.COM

Now that they've been kicking around for over a decade at festivals and comedy clubs around the globe, Winnipeg's celebrated improv duo **Crumbs** returns to our town this weekend to close Improvaganza. If you've never seen Steve Sim and Lee White whip a story out of the ether before, know this: they really are improvising.

With as much practice as they've had together, maybe it's not so surprising that they can take an audience suggestion of "Car Salesman" and turn it into an inspiring treatise on the state of the economy and the environment. That happened to be a 10-minute taste of what they have in store for their showcase, which will undoubtedly include plot, characters and plenty of chuckles, all in Crumbs' signature low-key style.

"It's calm, relaxed, chill—comedy and tragedy at the same time," explains Steve Sim. "A quote that we had from this guy in Germany once was 'I was laughing in one eye, and I was crying in the other eye.'"

"We'll each grab a suggestion when we go out onstage, and we'll improvise the whole time from that suggestion. There'll be multiple stories, multiple characters, we'll weave in and out of those stories," Sim explains in his showcase promoting spiel. A problem, some may say, is that their stories at their longer shows weave too well. Crumbs has actually been accused of scripting (gasp!) their performances.

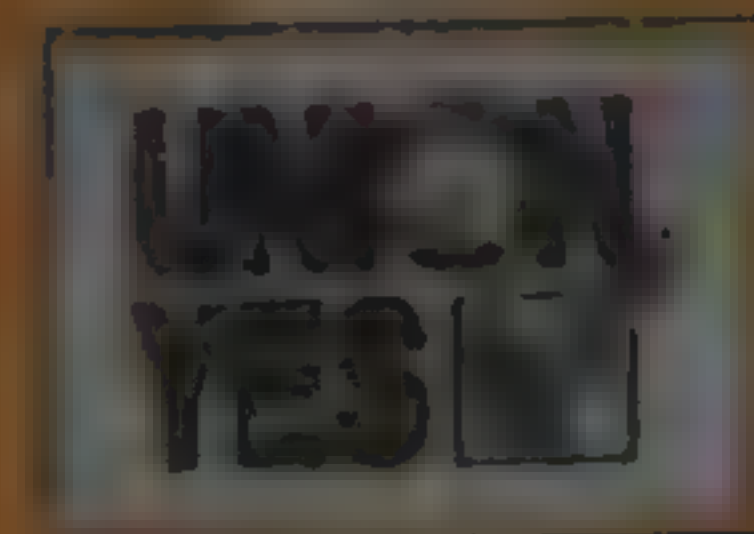
"Of course that's one of the highest compliments that improvisers can receive, people accusing you of not improvising," laughs Sim. "I don't think an audience really cares if it's an improvised show or not, they want it to be good. That's a bottom line."

"We do 100 percent improvise our shows," he asserts. "When we first started off we mixed sketch comedy with improv in our shows, and it got to the point that we were improvising better than we could write it down. We've been working together for so long we know each other's heads quite well, and we still want to surprise each other. I mean as calm and smooth as we can make it there's obvious times when we're fucking with each other's heads or throwing each other curveballs or being completely inspired by this random thing that happened," Sim adds. "So I don't know how people could be like, 'Oh they planned that out.' That would be the most complicated thing in the world. It makes me think, 'Really? Were you really watching the show? We're that good that we wrote this, like it was so exactly now. We planted that person in the audience that sneezed and stopped us in the middle of our scene?' You can't write this stuff. It's for now."

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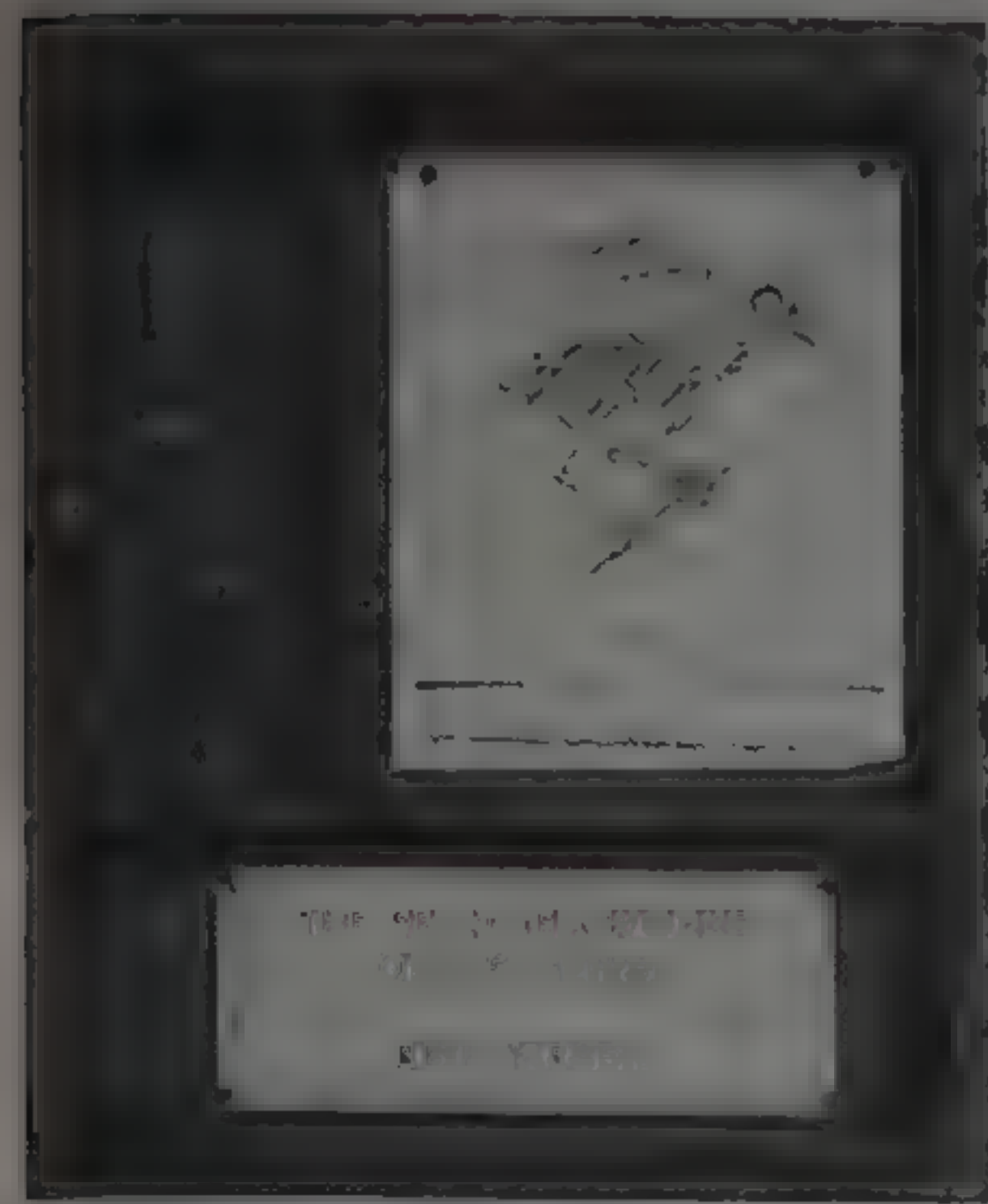
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Make me a map

Reif Larsen's story of a young mapmaker proves a dazzling debut



SAFE SELECTION >> Larsen provides a unique perspective in *Spivet* // Supplied

SUE KARR

//SUE@VUEWEEKLY.COM

Evolution is what Reif Larsen is exploring in his dazzling debut novel, *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet*: the evolution of an individual boy, a family, society, America and ideas are all explored. Everything may be fiction, but that doesn't mean truth isn't also there. The dilemma is how to recognize it.

The novel is told from the point of view of 12-year-old Tecumseh Sparrow (also known as T.S.) Spivet, a child gifted with a prodigious talent for mapmaking. The term cartographer is purposely not used in relation to T.S. because he not only draws maps of physical locations, but also relationships. For example, he maps his sister shucking corn, the inscrutable expressions on his father's face

and the association between length of shorts and leadership status among young urban boys. T.S. is the first character I've seen in a long time with a unique perspective on the human condition, and that in itself is an exciting discovery.

This mapping is taken to a meta-level with the organization of the book itself, which at first looks like a textbook with the main text surrounded by wide margins full of T.S.'s drawings and explanations. There are arrows directing the reader to the correct order in which to read the novel, so the book itself is mapped. While the story does lose momentum in some places, the addition of these marginal notes is a delectable surprise that one savours on every page. And though the format of the novel requires an uncommon commitment from the reader, it's well worth the effort.

T.S. is a special boy, raised on the isolated Coppertop Ranch in Montana, located on the Continental Divide, literally the choice between two worlds: the East and the West. After winning a prestigious award from the Smithsonian Institute, the young boy decides to go east and find his future among the halls of prestigious academia. A large portion of the novel chronicles T.S.'s adventures on the road, and the reader is almost tricked into thinking that the arrival in Washington is the true goal of the journey. But nothing in this novel is easy and the mystery of T.S.'s motivation is only gradually revealed.

Since the narrator is a child, many incidents and moments of the past are incompletely explained, which generates the mystery. Children, even gifted

children, are just not as sophisticated in their mental processes as adults. It's a difficult task to realistically portray any child as a protagonist due to the limitations imposed by nature. But the payoff

T.S. is the first character I've seen in a long time with a unique perspective on the human condition, and that in itself is an exciting discovery.

is the completely fresh perspective a character such as T.S. can offer. T.S.'s comments, interior monologue and observations are a constant challenge to our own perception of the world and the universe. Just because we have always thought something to be true doesn't imbue it with truth. As individuals, we are always in the process of constructing our world, of mapping it.

The strangeness of T.S.'s family life and certain moments of complete unreality in the story are easily overcome by the quality of Larsen's writing. While there is a multitude of meticulous detail and list making, there is more than enough emotional truth to counterbalance. Engaging, original, and a delight to both the senses and the intellect, this novel is a challenging and enchanting read. **V**

THE SELECTED WORKS OF T.S. SPIVET

BY REIF LARSEN

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Hit with a board

Arts association membership gives an insider's view of the arts scene

While I feel inclined to say that, as an arts writer, I'm aware of pressing issues within the arts community because it's my job, I must admit I'm mostly aware of these said issues because I sit on arts boards.

Almost every arts organization in this city is a non-profit society, legally governed by the provincial registry to operate by a volunteer board of directors. From the small chapter of cooperative artists working out of their garage to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, every non-profit organization has a board of directors that has to legally meet and be held accountable for the activities and operation of the organization. While the weight and responsibility of being on a board is less than desired by most individuals, especially artists with full-time jobs, this weight is also the leverage one needs to actively and convincingly push for the change we need.

A public arts board is created for public benefit, but the public itself needs to know it can get involved. This may be the most important part, as we have all have at one point passionately or vehemently lamented the situation of the arts and why arts organizations do this and why they do that. If you ever wonder where all the money goes, and why, become a member.

Most non-profit organizations function by maintaining a pool of general members, that anyone (and I mean anyone) can join for a relatively small fee, and as a member, you may and should attend an organization's annual general meeting, about which they must

legally inform its membership—usually with ample notice, depending on their bylaws. This is the easiest way to check into an organization, as their operating documents from their bylaws, financial statements, policies and staff reports must be held accountable to their membership. If they're not, then they're not functioning legally or ethically, and their status as an organization to receive operating funds and endowments needs to be called into question and reconsidered by their members and their funders.

In the past two weeks, I've attended two annual general meetings for arts organizations in this city. As a general member for both of these organizations, I felt inclined to exercise my right to check in on the status and direction of the organizations at hand. While change doesn't happen overnight, it is absolutely necessary to understand how something works before you get involved on any level.

When I was asked to join my first board, I politely declined. Board meetings can be bored meetings, and I didn't wholly appreciate the babble of bureaucracy, but as I became increasingly invested in the activities of an organization, I needed to invest some time and energy into understanding how they function. I can only encourage others to do the same, as it is your right and the majority's right to make things better for yourself and for your community.

Amy Fung is the editor of *PrairieArtsters.com*



PREVIEW // AMAAS 2009

AMAASing in Edmonton

Conference is a welcome gathering of media artists

SARAH HAMILTON

//HAMILTON@VUEWEEKLY.COM

If you didn't already have enough to do this week, the 2009 Alberta Media Arts Alliance Society conference is rolling into town. The conference, which runs from June 26 - 28, brings together media artists from across Alberta for two days to talk about both the business and art of their practices. Besides artist-aimed workshops by Alexis O'Hara and Trevor Anderson, the conference will spread its arms open to the public, with evening entertainment.

Media art includes a diverse range of artists practicing in new media, predominantly film and video, but it can also include sound, performance and installation. "Media artists really need a lot of people to create a project in most cases, so you kind of need to see these people and get to know these people," explains Amy Fung, conference organizer and *Vue Weekly* contributor.

"[The conference] is the only time of



MAKE SOME NOISE >> Alexis O'Hara comes to town for the 2009 AMAAS conference // Supplied

year the media artists in Alberta get to speak with one another, because we're all so separated—mostly concentrated in southern Alberta," explains Fung.

"We don't really have a media arts scene here in Edmonton that is very visible, so it's good to see what your peers are doing once a year."

The AMAAS conference launches with a screening of *Prairie Tales*, an annual exhibition of Alberta-made short films (see Omar Mouallem's review of this year's edition on page 28). The annual event is juried by a panel of Alberta media artists and highlights the diverse

The conference is the only time of year the media artists in Alberta get to speak with one another

work happening in the province over the past two years.

"It's important to connect [Alberta] films to the audiences where they're made from," explains Fung.

Highlighting the diversity of media art, the screening is followed by a bumpin' afterparty described as "a live, improvisational jam" between FAVA and BEAMS at the Hydeaway. A similar event will be taking place on Saturday, with video artists Chris Payne and Kelly Bolen joining forces with some of the performers from the 2009 Jazz Festival at the Sutton Place Hotel. And, though it takes place after the confer-

ence proper, Alexis O'Hara will be performing her avant-garde noise at the ARTery on July 2.

I make the conference sound like its one big party, but this isn't the case. During the day, conference attendees will be learning from artists who are working in the field. The conference is an opportunity for professional development that the arts community needs in order to sustain itself. It's everything from how an artistic practice evolves to how to apply for funding. This is the sort of professional development opportunity that artists working in other media, like painting, music or literary arts, would be happy to have. Perhaps AMAAS' model could be used in future to create these professional development opportunities for other creative industries. **V**

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Whatever Works

Vue's arts writers explore the ins and outs of The Works



FIRST NATIONS >> Terrence Houle's *Transforming Motion* is a festival highlight // Nadya Kwandibens

SARAH HAMILTON
// HAMILTON@VUEWEEKLY.COM

What I've come to realize about **The Works** is that if you look at it like an art festival the same way the AGA or SNAP might put together an art festival, you're going to end up disappointed: it's not that kind of festival. It's more of a Margaret Atwood-esque, everyone-can-be-creative-type festival. They bring in artists and shows that other galleries in the city don't, for better or for worse. So here are a few of the winners from this year.

The festival organizers courted Calgary artist Terrance Houle to bring his exhibition *Transforming Motions* to The Works this year (showing at Churchill Square). Houle positioned the exhibition against more institutionally driven shows by using artists who had a strong connection to the Aboriginal community and who were struggling with the disparity between city life and rural/traditional/reserve life. Nadya Kwandibens' photographs are radiant and well composed. Videos by Duane Linklater and Larry Blackhorse have great production value and thoughtfully address their subject matter. The exhibition is small, but by avoiding being over-ambitious, Houle shows an aptitude for articulating meaningful ideas and experiences without killing them in the process.

I've said it more than once, but I've so far enjoyed watching the evolution of Robert Harpin's *Call of Nature* down in Louise McKinney Park. The work itself is fairly simple: it's the interaction with it that I've found interesting. Last time I checked the "office" was still standing, but a little worse for wear. Birdseed dominates the space and the accompanying markings of birds (droppings) pepper the surfaces. The notes have curled and those cubicle walls are looking a little worse for wear. I think park patrons are also using the wastebasket unironically. I'm hoping next time I visit, a coyote has curled up to rest on the desk.

When in doubt, I default to classic photography. The exhibition *Images of the Natural World* by The Monochrome Guild (Sutton Place Hotel) is quiet and contemplative. The photos are presented neatly and articulate a sort-of bygone Canadian wilderness that still exists in catalogues from the Whyte Museum.

Lisa Brawn's *Throwing of Underpants Strictly Prohibited* (Manulife Place) has also been getting a lot of attention due to her campy, nostalgia-inducing subject matter. Her work is well-crafted but straddles the line between relic

they are all worth stopping by, and they will be cool and less crowded.

One of the more frustrating parts of the festival is the program. The Works program is thorough and long. An abridged pull-out map and a hierarchy of information would tip us off as to what are the important exhibitions are and what are the family activities are. It's not my area of expertise, but when it interferes with the art viewing, I think it's an issue.

Another frustrating part of the festival is the overwhelming presence of vendors Churchill Square. The art



OUT AND ABOUT >> Robert Harpin's *Call of Nature* divides our critics // Robert Harpin

and kitsch that can be disconcerting. Am I supposed to laugh? Should I think contemplatively about the impact of these figures on pop culture?

In all of this, it's easy to forget that Harcourt House, SNAP and Latitude 53 all have shows up right now—very good shows which both participate in The Works and also follow their regularly scheduled programming. It's easy to forget about the artist-run centres when it's warm out and there are green onion cakes to be had, but

has been relegated to one feature tent (great!) but let's get more art on the square instead of at satellite venues which are only open on weekdays. It's frustrating as a patron to go out on the weekend and find venues closed and it's frustrating to wade through a sea of wares in order to find the content (or the information tent ... or the bathroom). In future, I'd like to see more art on the square and less shopping—that's what we're here for anyways, isn't it? **V**



BALLSY >> Allen Ball's photos intrigue // Allen Ball

ADAM WALDRON-BLAIN
// ADAMWB@VUEWEEKLY.COM

Although they've backed off from the "world's largest" angle in their marketing this year, *The Works* is still unwieldy. Despite Sarah Hamilton's attempt last week to cover the entirety of *The Works* in one long article, it's difficult to get an impression of the festival quickly. It's not just because there's a lot going on: I've seen a few interesting shows, but the festival has a feeling of emptiness and rote to it. It doesn't provide a compelling argument to support its own size and attendant stage, beer garden and market.

The theme this year, "Heat," is not ground-breaking, and is buried amongst numerous tenuously related shows. Several preexisting shows in galleries have been tacked onto the festival just to provide a sense of completeness: so that we can pretend that nothing happens in Edmonton without a festival. But some of the festival shows I saw are worthy of note.

In the big tent on Churchill Square, next to the stage and beer garden torn from a different festival, are two shows. The first is a collection of science-fiction future images by digital artists, for some reason printed on canvases, which is fairly boring, but may draw an audience. Next door to it is a much more interesting show curated by Terrance Houle, *Transforming Motions*. Although two of the three video pieces in it were non-functional during my visit, I was impressed by the third. Larry Blackhorse's film of a girl learning Navajo was surprisingly captivating, considering how few clues I had to the dialogue. The film's protagonist was not too far ahead of me, just learning to read and write the language, and the work is very approachable. It's shown alongside a series of photographs of urban native life by Nadya Kwandibens.

There are more photographs worth a look in Allen Ball's *Spectacle in a State of Exception* across the street in the Stanley Milner Library. The photos walk a line between the traditional view of an outsider into a desert military base, influenced hugely by cinema, news broadcasts and video games, and a portrayal of the

personal space of the soldiers stationed there. The images emphasize the distance between the two realities, playing with cinematic beauty and light but refusing to claim direct communication of personal emotions as films inevitably do.

The only real painting show I saw—aside from one canvas accompanying Allen Ball's photographs and a fairly pointless collection of vaguely environmentalist work downstairs in the library—was Roger Crait's *It's Time for Red so Put the Knives Away*, which has enough energy for the rest of the festival. The best works are the two on the west wall of the Scotia Place lobby, but all of Crait's paintings are large and full of movement. Crait's use of collage is a bit uneven: it's integral to his paintings, and he creates hollow spaces in the paintings and adds numerous objects to his surfaces, but it doesn't always work. Adding reflective material to the airplanes in the skies of his crazy cityscapes works well, but his overuse of graphic logos is trying and obvious. The work on the west wall goes far less overboard with this, and there is one spot where some credit-card logos are expertly treated, cut up and composited into the surface so that they are less jarring, but just as meaningful.

Meanwhile, in the program, Robert Harpin's public installation *Call of Nature* is caught awkwardly between the "Downtown" and "Art Around Town" sections, but it's not too hard to find in Louise McKinney Park. His office-cubicle-in-the-park is a fun idea, but like a lot of *The Works* (and the recent *Office Show*) it doesn't seem quite complete. Other than the guestbook-binder and a selection of reading materials, the only documents in the cubicle when I visited were an ICLEI evaluation and a second empty binder. I'm not sure what Harpin's office-dweller does for a living, and I wish there was more content. But perhaps the birds got it. ▽

UNTIL JULY 1

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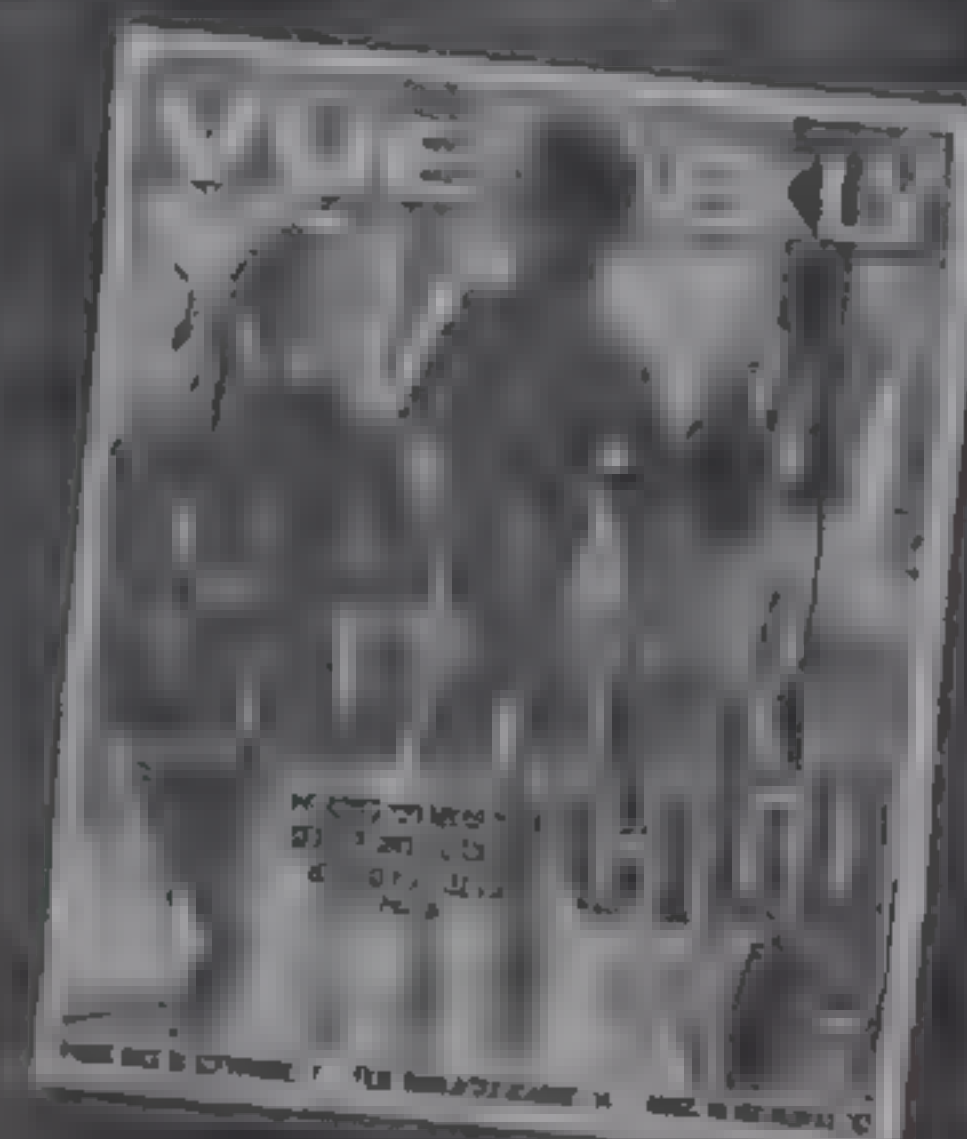


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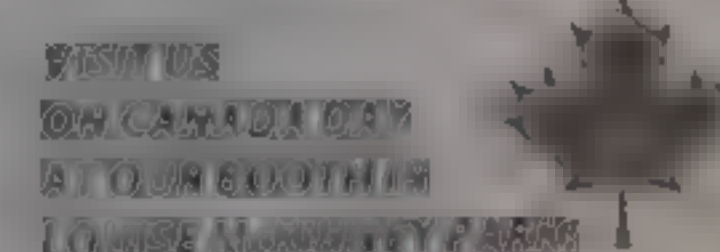
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PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARYL VOCAT

Dana Holst's *Prey* and Daryl Vocat's *The Secret of the Midnight Shadow* may have come together independently as solo exhibitions about little girls and little boys, respectively, but both these exhibitions from contemporary artists share a common ground.

While Holst moved from Ontario to Alberta, Vocat has moved out east from the Prairies. Their bodies of work and interests are not necessarily opposing of each other, but their aesthetics are radically different. Their pairing here in Edmonton demonstrates a unique programming trait that leaves room for independent ideas to speak to one another from communities far and near, crisscrossing in our seeming solitude. Respectively, the works focus on the representation of little girls and little boys, with the theme of the childhood constructions of gender identities undercutting both their works during the precious era of our formative years.

Prey evokes an era of garters and garlands. Hanging in a pink and stenciled salon parlour marked with heavy dark lines and ornate frames throughout, the room has all the post-Victorian charm of golden gilds and frilled glamour. Using mostly silverpoint illustrations, the prepubescent cherub-faced girls in Holst's works are dressed the part of the innocent and virtuous, too young to be fully sexualized, yet not too young to be gendered. The girls are sweet, bratty, and whatever else you would associate with the behavioural patterns of those with dimpled cheeks and ringlet curls. Decked out with butterflies in their hair and ribbons around their waists, each girl can simultaneously hold the vacant gaze of the lost or the sinister stare of the possessed.

Holst poses the girls in various stages of the hunt, eyeing up their prey or looming over their kill, with pistol or



BOYSCOUT'N >> Daryl Vocat evokes childhood, among other things, in *The Secret of the Midnight Shadow* // Daryl Vocat

bow and arrow in their chubby little hands. The illustrations are anything but gory; rather, they are graphic in suggestive violence, soliciting the inevitable conclusion that these girls could kill, but refusing to show them in the act. With subtle shadowing in their face, the girls hold the temperaments of riled hunters. They are not hunting for survival, but sport, and the desire to hunt is the desire to overpower their surroundings. Holst composes the girls

with their prey out of context; that is, the girls are dolled up, sitting on fluffy clouds or with their cherished pets, but their desire to prey upon others is situated as generic as a greeting card composition, save for the bullet holes in the corpi and the weapons in hand.

Aesthetically and conceptually, Holst bridges the gap between the pronounced nostalgia of identity by Canadian artist Angela Grossmann and the harnessed latent aggression in former-

Edmontonian painter Tammy Salzl. The primary difference unique to *Prey* is that Holst is situating the gallery space beyond just the frames, touching down on an era when women were elevated as the innocent while focusing on an age when desire and power are shaped and groomed.

Linking directly to Holst in their shared fascination on the formation of desire and power, Daryl Vocat's exhibit in

the main space re-creates the childhood imagination as a lived, illustrated pop-up diorama. The midnight garden is filled with dark corners and unexplained moments, bodies suspended in the air and limbs jutting from bushes and trees. There is a charged sexuality in the positioning of the cut out figures, re-contextualizations of illustrated boy scout figures in various poses. Crouched as a wolf, splattered in blood or huddled in a shirtless triad, the boys are taken out of their original context of instructive diagrams of skill building to Vocat's world of exploration and imagination. The world lurks, but the boys are active in their engagements with each other.

Directly facing the midnight garden is the series "The Old Guard is Dead," a set of silkscreens on paper depicting the illustrated scouts at play in a real park. The park in question is here photographed empty and in the daytime—and is apparently a well-known cruising ground. Situating the scouts at play on cruising grounds and titling each piece after an innuendo-friendly Scout guideline, Vocat elicits an overtly homoerotic reading of the scout's highly structured team building and male bonding. Vocat does this through shades of humour, but the boys' blank expressions layered through Vocat's sexualized setting creates a much more intense atmosphere than the midnight garden, which still remains somewhere between ambiguity and the imagination. But here in the photographed park, nature, once a subject conquerable by the Scouts' tenacity, is now undeniably and unimaginatively the setting for repressed abandonment and play.

As a complimentary contrast, the boys in Vocat's world, much like the girls in Holst's, suspend their own identities by releasing the very constructs of how they have been represented.

UNTIL SAT JUL 11

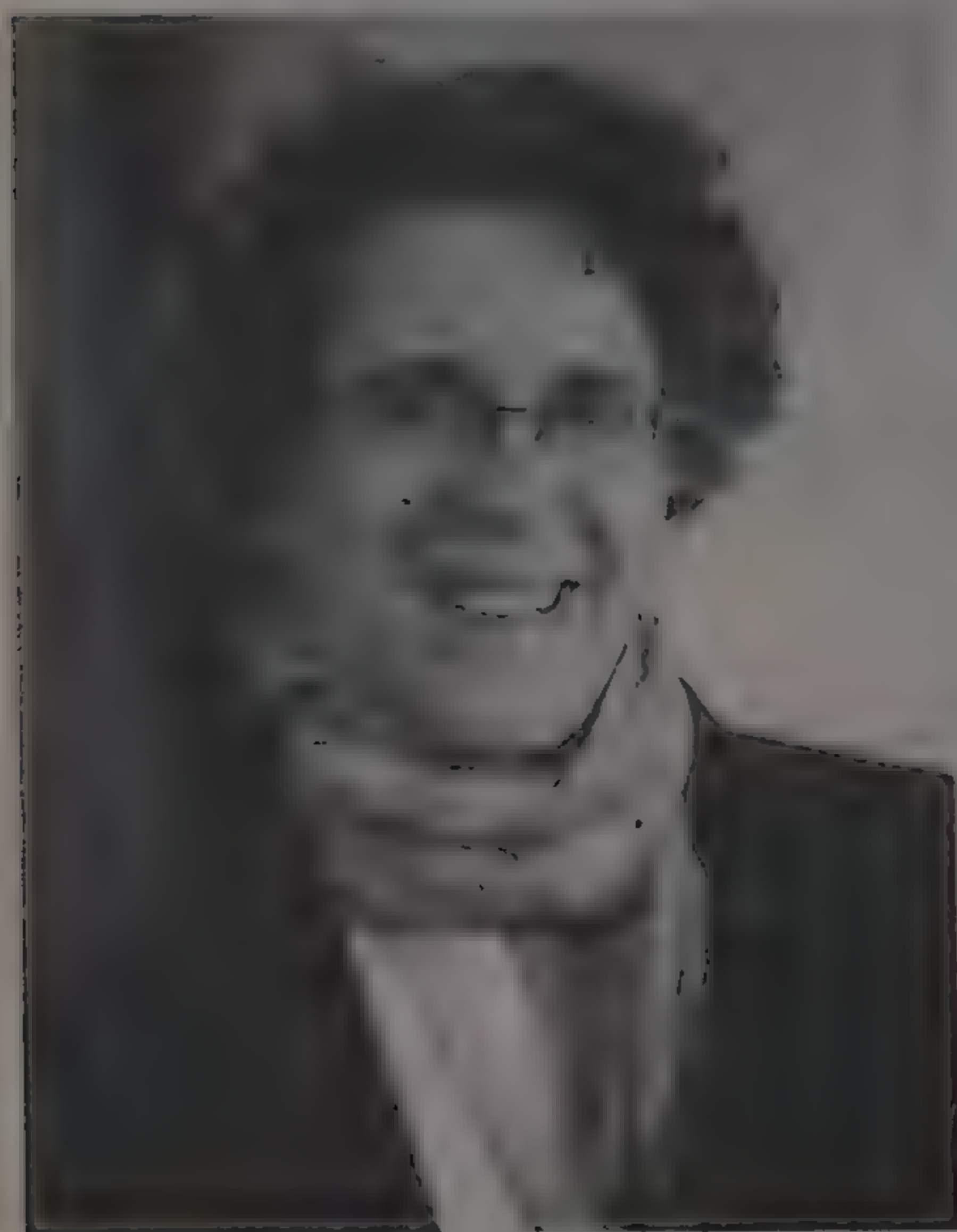
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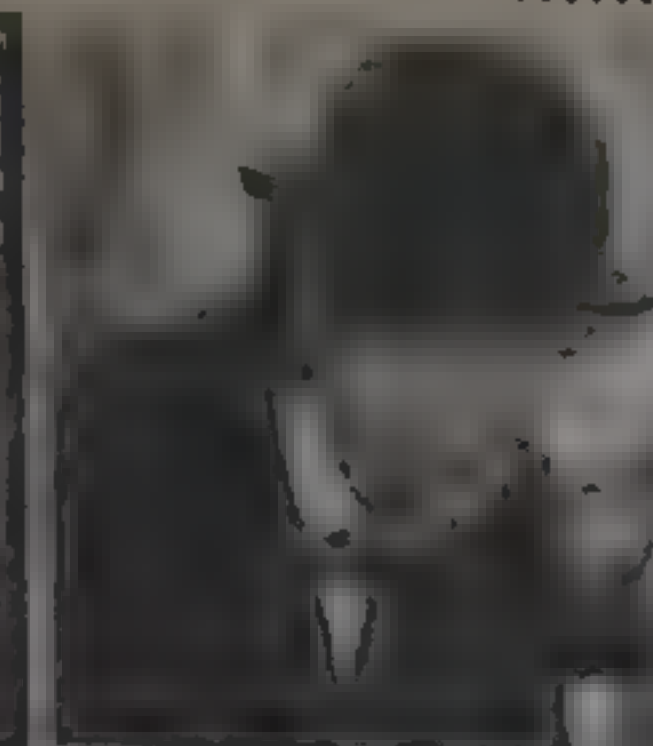
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ORIGINAL HOSTS



ACTION // TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN

Fall down go boom

The latest Transformers baffles Vue's critics—even the one who likes explosions

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Trading off a combination of '80s nostalgia and Bay-brand explosions, the first Transformers proved the biggest blockbuster of 2007, making a sequel to the toy-spawned franchise pretty much inevitable. What wasn't inevitable was just how incoherent and joyless *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* would be. Ramping up the action along with the painful human interaction and cheesy comedy, it's like the relatively sedate and occasionally passably entertaining first movie merged with the biggest, baddest elements of the summer blockbuster to form a mess of epic proportions.

In *Fallen*, the Decepticons return with, well, vengeance, trying to get their hands on a power source that they evidently hid on Earth thousands of years ago. Once again, though, they'll need to go through the Autobots and their smart-aleck human sidekick Sam Witwicky (Shia LaBeouf), who holds the secret to this power in his mind. We think.

In an effort to sort through the wreckage, Vue's film editor/resident Transformer expert David Berry and associate music editor/resident explosions-on-film expert Bryan Birtles sat down and hashed out their thoughts on the summer's dumbest blockbuster.

DAVID BERRY: I'm honestly not sure where I want to begin with this one in particular, so I'll just ask you what you thought of the first one, and how you think this one stacks up.

BRYAN BIRTLES: Well, in terms of shit blowing up—the only reason I watch movies—I thought this one was better. In terms of me being able to understand what the hell was going on at any given time, however, I honestly have no idea what just happened. I liked the first one, though, but I'm not sure about this one. What did you think?

DB: Well, my main complaint with the first one, besides the fact it was horrible, was that they really didn't have enough of the giant robots fighting, which as far



STAY DOWN >> *Revenge of the Fallen* sullies the mediocre name of the Transformers franchise // Supplied

as I can tell is the only actual reason this series exists (besides, I suppose, selling toys/cars): This one certainly had more of that, although it also had a lot more of the annoying, by-the-numbers human interaction: really, if you're going to insist on subjecting us to Shia LaBeouf for two-thirds of the film, you should try to write characters and scenarios that don't feel like they're ripped out of a community college screenwriting textbook. Or you could at least make the comedy less hammy.

BB: Speaking of how ridiculous Shia LaBeouf is, can I just wonder out loud how there could ever be a problem in the world that President Obama (who's name-checked in the movie) would fumble but that ol' dirt-stache would somehow be more equipped to solve?

But yeah, anyway, it's like I was saying: there's just too many moments during this movie where there's just no chance of having a clue of what is going on. A Decepticon that looks like a pretty girl? Why wouldn't all of these robots look like humans? They might blend in better.

A piece of the All Spark has been in his old hoodie this whole time, but the Decepticons took this long to figure it out? Robots that have ancestors and pass on seemingly genetic traits?

DB: Yeah, it seems at least a little odd to complain about logical holes in a movie based on a toy franchise, but at the same time, a lot of them seemed pretty gaping and clueless even for that, and especially considering it was scripted by the guys who wrote the infinitely more entertaining, sensible *Star Trek*. I watched a lot of the cartoon as a kid, and even though they couldn't be bothered to match up the right voices to the right Transformers half the time, they were able to string together a more coherent history—seriously, robots in egg sacs? What the hell was that?

To go back to what you said earlier about not being able to follow, though, I thought that extended even beyond the plot, the incoherence of which I guess you could forgive if you were just looking for shit blowing up: when it actually came time for robot fights, I often had trouble fol-

lowing exactly what was happening. Considering it was all done with computers, you'd think they could have made it a bit clearer. It's like they blew their wad on character design without thinking a whole lot about how they would interact. Your thoughts on the action?

BB: Absolutely the action could totally get confusing. I found myself at times just waiting it out to see who walked away from a fight. I think the problem is that a fight between two giant robots is kind of like a car crash—which I guess, in this instance, it technically is. It's like you've got a whole bunch of car parts strewn across the highway, but if you only get to see it for a second, you have no idea which car is which. So it's just a jumble of metal and who knows who is fighting who.

Speaking of cars though—and I know it's ridiculous to complain about this—but the lame product placement was way too much. Not only did I sit there wondering how much bailout money GM blew on funding this more-than-two-hour commercial, but this time around some of

the Autobots are concept cars that GM is probably hoping will propel them out of bankruptcy. I kept expecting Bumblebee to transform into the Chevy Volt at the end of the movie, and "Coming in 2010!" to appear below it.

DB: Actually, the gratuitous hardware that bothered me the most was the military stuff. Leaving aside the (again) odd logic of having the humans fight giant, alien robots when they've got their own giant, alien robots to do it for them (and didn't the Transformers have, like, force-fields that human weapons couldn't hurt? Wasn't that in the first movie?), I don't understand why, when you have a whole cast of giant, alien robots who exist only to fight each other, you choose to get a hard-on over tanks and naval destroyers—that scene where they use the rail gun to shoot Devastator, the giant combiner Transformer, sort of drives this point home to me.

Alright, towards wrapping this up: what was the most ridiculous moment for you? This film was full of them.

BB: It's such a tough one, but I might have to go with the dream sequence at the end. I mean I don't want to give anything away here, but let's just say that in the middle of the largest battle between humans, good robots and bad robots that Earth has ever witnessed wasn't a great time for Shia LaBeouf to take a nap.

DB: He actually [spoiler alert for Transformers fans] went inside the Matrix, but it was indeed just as ridiculous as you suggest. I'm going to go ahead and say the testicles on Devastator gets my vote, although any scene with the blackface-level-stereotype Autobot twins has to be up there, too.

To really put the cap on this ridiculous film, any one-liners you haven't had a chance to get off yet?

BB: I just can't believe I was watching a disastrously sub-par sci-fi movie and Jeff Goldblum wasn't there.

DB: Hey-oh! I'm going to close by saying the most entertaining thing I saw at the theatre was the guy in the popcorn line trying to hit on a girl by using his *Transformers* knowledge. He failed about as spectacularly as the film. **V**

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Summer melodies

College romance kicks off Edmonton Film Society's Songs of Summer

JONATHAN BUSCH
 BY JONATHAN BUSCH FOR VUE WEEKLY

Kick off the frivolous joy of summer with MGM's 1947 remake of the Roaring Twenties musical *Good News*, a fun though sexless college romp starring sweetie-pie June Allyson and unsung Rat Packer Peter Lawford. Whereas the film might signify the ongoing attempts of the Hollywood musical to maintain its perky relevance after WWII, it nonetheless combines a reliable set of revival melodies and energetic dance routines for a skillfully maneuvered twirlabout across the studio lot. The strong will and conniving romantic methods of both the leading and supporting female roles might also be argued in favour of the film's gendered portrayal, despite how many eyebrows might be raised at the stellar though culturally insensitive number, "Pass the Peace Pipe," written specifically for this film version and nominated for an Oscar.

Before college kids donned togas or attended pro-choice rallies, their main concern was standing behind the leather-capped football team for the upcoming big game. When true romance shakes up the star player's



SUMMER LOVE >> A good, old-fashioned Hollywood musical // Supplied

will to win, Tait College's shot at the championship is put at stake. New student and gold-digger Pat (Patricia Marshall) uses her grand gams and flashy style to get the ga-gas from all the boys, including aforementioned star Tommy Marlowe (Lawford). He assumes that learning French is the perfect plot to woo her, seeking the assistance of brainy student and as-

sistant librarian Connie Lane (Allyson), who outwits and eventually charms him more than any sorority princess ever could. But as Pat learns of Tommy's rich "Pickle King" daddy, she is suddenly interested in pursuing his heart for every imaginable virtue of selfishness. Tommy's infatuation with Pat has him stomp harder and harder over Connie's poor heart, until he learns that true love should be neither a monetary nor social gain.

Meanwhile, the secondary love game of *Good News* finds an adorable tryst between ballsy socialite Babe (Joan McCracken) and Bobby (Ray McDonald), a benchwarming anti-hero who wishes for more luck with the campus gals. Babe might be a dream come true, if it wasn't for Beef (Loren Tindall), her oafish team starter boyfriend ready to plow over any other wise guy who comes between them. So instead, Bobby runs in the other direction, forcing Babe to ruthlessly scheme her way into his heart, including being almost crushed to death by Bobby's troupe of pals as she hides in the backseat of his broken jalopy.

For its approachingly jaded era, the romantic element of *Good News* hardly locks itself in. Musicals of this period

seem to invest themselves solely in the relieving spectacle of song and dance, working towards the critical distancing from the dream machine that so gloriously fed into the studio-mocking comedy of *Singin' in the Rain* and powerful watershed of *Carmen Jones* (the latter of which is included in the Edmonton Film Society's musical-themed summer program). Its failure to sweep the audience away turns our attention to the effortless numbers and the raw

“Musicals of this period seem to invest themselves solely in the relieving spectacle of song and dance.”

performative qualities of its cast, notably McCracken, who ball-bustingly grins and grinds her way through every step to steal each of her scenes (hardly a wonder that she would be famed choreographer and director Bob Fosse's second marriage).

Good News is only the kick-off EFS' roster of classic musicals, with every week offering another significant

step toward the evolution of the songful story. A mailroom clerk rises to the top of the corporate ladder in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* while Doris Day sports her signature blonde do in *The Pajama Game* and *Tea For Two*. Also included are edgier models like Norman Jewison's *Fiddler on the Roof* and Blake Edwards' *Victor/Victoria*, seeing the entrance of the modern musical that would usher social issues and bizarre sexuality into the mix. It's a fair treat, especially after last summer's messy *Mamma Mia!* and the trite and painful musical tribute of the recent Oscar telecast privileging the talents of Zac Efron and Vanessa Hudgens over veterans like Joel Grey and Bebe Neuwirth.

MON, JUN 29 (8 PM)
GOOD NEWS
 DIRECTED BY CHARLES WALTERS
 WRITTEN BY BETTY COMDEN, ADOLPH GREEN
 STARRING PETER LAWFORD, JUNE ALLYSON, JOAN MCCrackEN
 SHOWING AS PART OF THE EDMONTON FILM SOCIETY'S SONGS OF SUMMER PROGRAM
 ROYALALBERTAMUSEUM.CA/EVENTS/MOVIES/MOVIES.HTM FOR DETAILS

★★★★★

Danuta Brouwer, Custodial Assistant Twelve years with Edmonton Public Schools

I know learning can be better when the school is clean. It's a healthier environment for students. That's why I do this – it's important to me to contribute to the education of our students.



Food for thought

My Dinner With Andre engrosses like a good conversation should

It's at least a little bit dense to compare a movie that's basically nothing but a two-hour conversation to a thoroughly engrossing conversation, but, well, fuck it: It's a mark of how simply and purely *My Dinner With Andre* captures its eponymous experience that metaphorical generations of its power seem sort of obtuse or disrespectful, like trying to come up with a clever simile to describe a funeral. The conversation between slightly fictionalized versions of playwright/homunculus Wallace Shawn and eccentric theatre director Andre Gregory that is the entirety of the film is intoxicating and provocative (in the thoughtful sense of the word) like



truly good conversation can be, an enveloping mix that's liable to leave you drifting off in ruminative, possibly ambulatory, thought, turning over the Big Topics that form its substance as much as trying to remember the last time it was that you had such an earnestly revelatory discussion.

It's the handling of those Big Topics that really distinguishes *My Dinner With Andre* as a work of genius. A brief overview of what's actually discussed could pass for a round-up of a night with a few insufferable if engaged philosophy undergrads: once they get past Gregory's utterly bizarre, almost nervous-breakdown-type stories about conducting speechless theatre work-

shops in a Polish forest or living with a Buddhist monk in the Saharan desert or the fascist underpinnings of *The Little Prince*, the talk is cocktail philosophical, basically about the search for meaning in the modern world, about what it takes to actually feel or experience something and how the way we live is driving us away from those questions. Despite the fact they basically occupy two classic opposing positions on the matter—Gregory the sort of transcendental spiritualist who can only find meaning in these fantastical journeys, Shawn the urban rationalist who makes a convincing argument for the beauty of electric blankets and cigar shops—their conversation never feels like it's the untethered meditation of disaffected elites; these are earnest questions of two reasonably intelligent men, facing in their middle age the realization that life never quite manages to sort itself out (and also possibly the fact the world may be slowly turning itself into uninterested and uninteresting zombies).

Though you could probably appreciate the film solely on its philosophical merits—

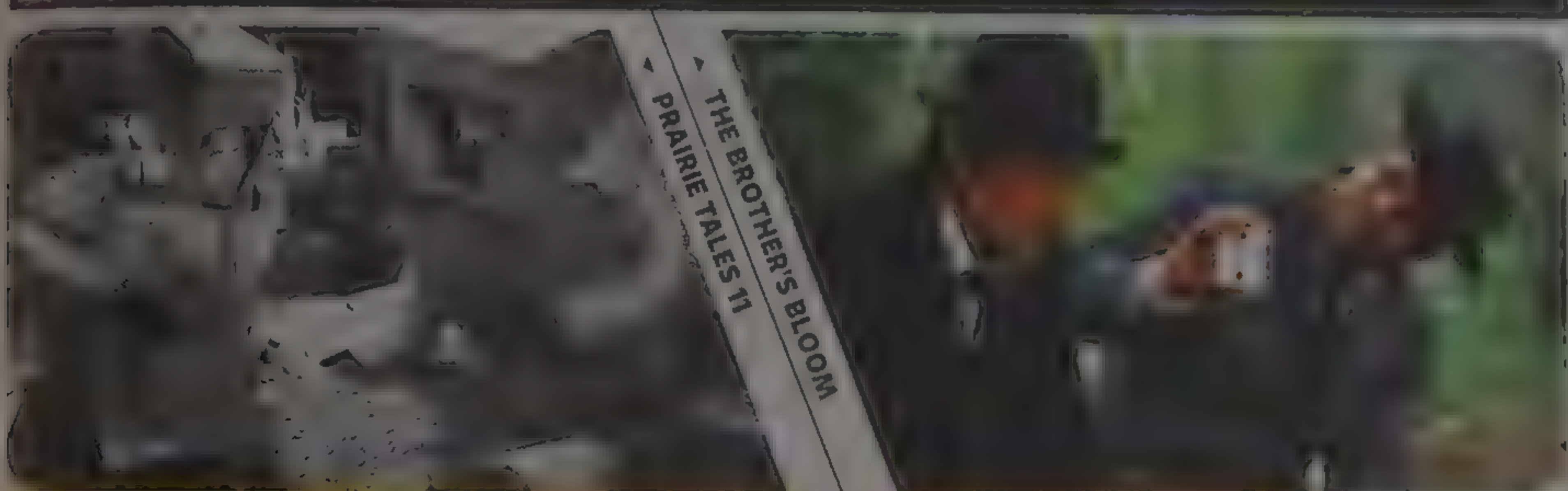
Shawn, who guided the script based on actual conversations between the two, is a gifted and heady playwright, which accounts for both its depth and its somewhat stagy setting—one of the things that really separates it from any other number of talky dramas is its touch for little moments *My Dinner With Andre* used to be a kind of perjorative shorthand for what people disliked about "arty" films, but anyone who dismisses the film as nothing but two men talking over dinner is guilty of something the two go to great lengths to condemn not really being present. For all its talk, some of its most sublime moments are the tiny things that Louis Malle's mostly static camera captures. One of my favourites is a tiny bit where Shawn braces himself against the gust created by an oncoming subway car while heading to the dinner, looking as relieved by its breeze as he is attacked by the city. Malle is especially adept at catching little tics in his actors: he frequently pulls up tight on Gregory's face, sparkling when he's particularly excited, lapsing into sincere thoughtfulness when Shawn punctures one of his more fanciful notions, and Shawn's

nervous conversational tics are given room to breathe, further engrossing.

That said, the aesthetics are really just there to create the proper mood for truly appreciating the conversation, which is fairly stunning. Gregory's anecdotes sort of coast by on a bit of offbeat charm, the wanderings of a near-loon, but it's when he starts to talk about them as the actions of a prehensible man that things really get going. Once the two start bouncing off of each other, the honest depth of the subjects is revealed, and each has a handful of fairly piercing personal insights—how little we pay attention to each other, how self-satisfied and smug we can be, the need for purpose and the fear of nothing—that linger over both them and the audience.

The extras on this Criterion release seem to respect the power of conversation as well, including an interesting interview between Shawn and Malle and a very revealing talk with both actors conducted by Noah Baumbach. Neither exactly matches up to the film, but they're enlightening little bits on the type of people it takes to make something like this.

FILM REVIEWS



Film Capsules

Opening this week

The Brothers Bloom

Written and directed by Rian Johnson
Starring Adrien Brody, Rachel Weisz, Mark Ruffalo
★★★★☆

Wayfaring grifters, the brothers Stephen Bloom and just plain old Bloom—the latter presumably having lost his given name in a Polynesian poker game, or perhaps while convalescing from ennui in some Alpine hospice—have toured the world in search of ever-more risk-courting and inventive cons, but the lifestyle's no good anymore for Little Bloom and hasn't been for some time. He wants out, but is persuaded into the proverbial one-last-big-score by his tireless elder. Their ultimate mark is a lonesome and preposterously wealthy heiress with a fantastical, perhaps autistic penchant for collecting and perfecting hobbies, making her something like all of the Tenenbaum children rolled into one. Over the course of our story she'll inevitably move from being a surprisingly formidable victim to a brilliant accomplice.

That reference to *The Royal Tenenbaums* just sort of slipped out, but it's tough not to let such references accumulate when trying to describe *Brick* writer/director Rian Johnson's second feature, which has been crafted top to bottom with the sort of cutesy comic pageantry and fraternal drama which Wes Anderson has made his domain for well over a decade now, and

with considerable success. *The Brothers Bloom* has been craftily titled so that it ends with both a surname and a verb; despite the avalanche of plot and the truly magnificent efforts of its actors, though, it's hard to say if anyone or anything truly blooms here since the movie itself is often so stiflingly manicured as to preempt anything so spontaneous as discovery. Right from the prologue, which finds the Blooms as children already working elaborate ruses and dressing themselves as Amish undertakers, which ends with a prematurely cathartic slow-motion climax, replete with exultant Rod Stewart bursting through the speakers and an explosive announcement of the film's title spelled out in lights, we're meant to feel really excited about what we're seeing—even before it's even properly begun!

The casting is ideal. Maybe too ideal. Adrien Brody brings the same melancholic amiability, uncertainty and romantic longing to Bloom as he did to Peter Whitman in ... Wes Anderson's *The Darjeeling Limited*. His scarecrow physique seems custom-built for heroes who wilt like a frail weed when they suffer but are just as easily swept up in the winds of an exuberant game plan. As Stephen, Mark Ruffalo is all charm, and I mean all. He's so charming it seems he could con himself right out of existence. (He's also one of my favourite screen actors to watch eat.) Rachel Weisz as Penelope, the mark, is so damn good that she frequently makes what should be an annoying artifice of a character into a gas, walking with the gait of a 12-year-

old who hasn't yet figured out she has the body of a rather fetching and shapely thirtysomething woman. Robby Coltrane arrives on the scene to ham it up with absolute mastery. Sadly, Rinko Kikuchi, who didn't get to talk in her Oscar-nominated performance as a deaf teen in *Babel*, still doesn't get to talk while playing Stephen's sidekick, a demolitions nut rendered as a tired stereotype of mute Japanese cool.

So we've got terrific actors, a dazzling and diverse array of locations, and a little Asian girl who wears kooky costumes and lives to blow shit up. We're having fun! Or so we're often reminded. With its deluge of sight gags—Penelope's casual smashing of her car into a brick wall is admittedly a real winner—and shower of winkly literary nods, there's an eagerness to impress on display throughout *The Brothers Bloom* that most of us can't help but feel kindly to, the way we might indulge some precocious kid who just can't wait to show you her entire collection of rare stamps or, more fittingly, magic tricks. Narrated by magician Ricky Jay, *The Brothers Bloom* is finally an ode to the pleasures of getting fooled, of slight of hand and fast fingers. But the hand guiding this tale is too slight by half, giving us a good enough time when it's all just a lark, but fumbling things up when he expects us to invest more deeply in the emotional journeys. I'd have been content with mere showmanship.

JOSEF BRAUN

JOSEF@VUEWEEKLY.COM

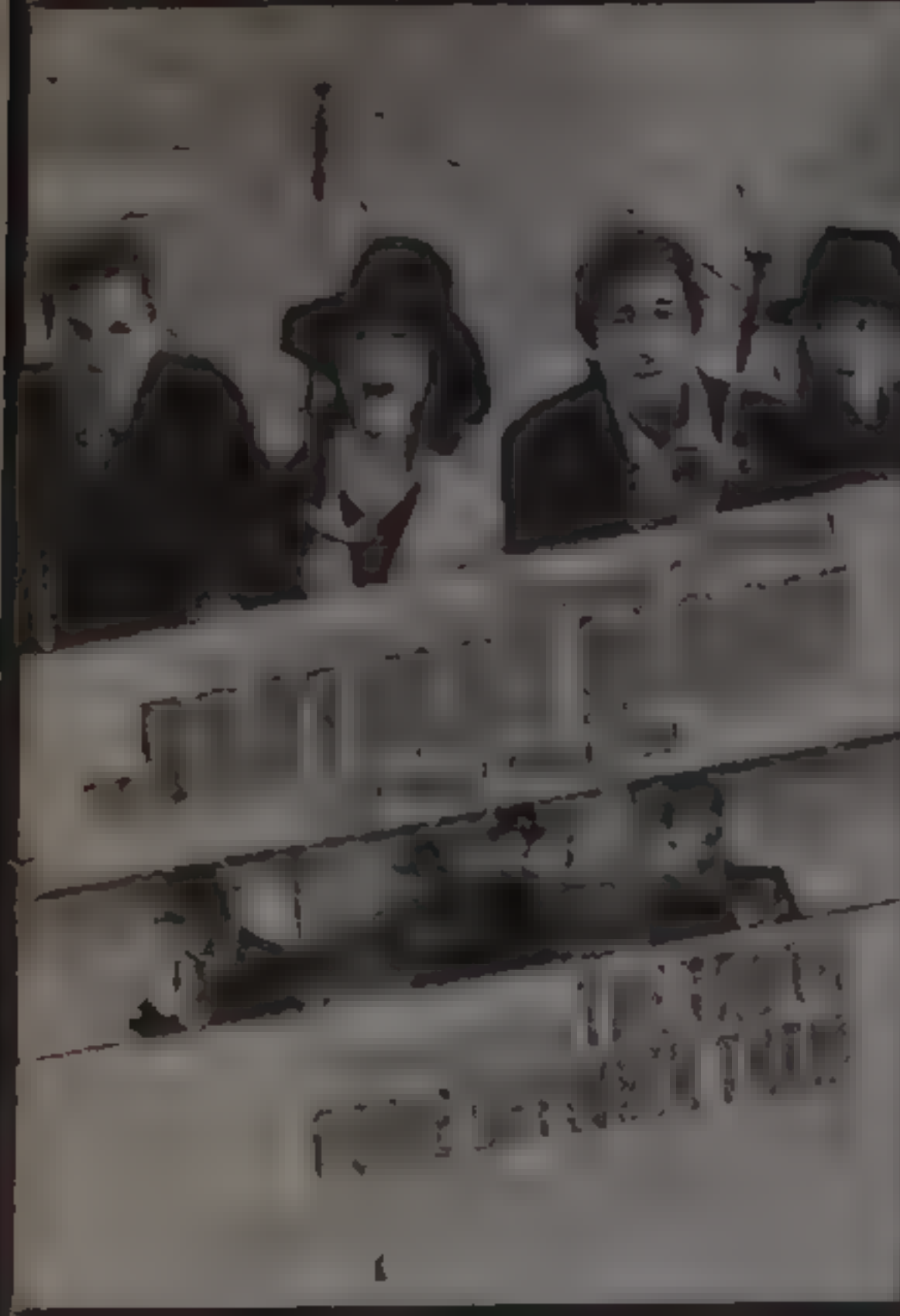
CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >>



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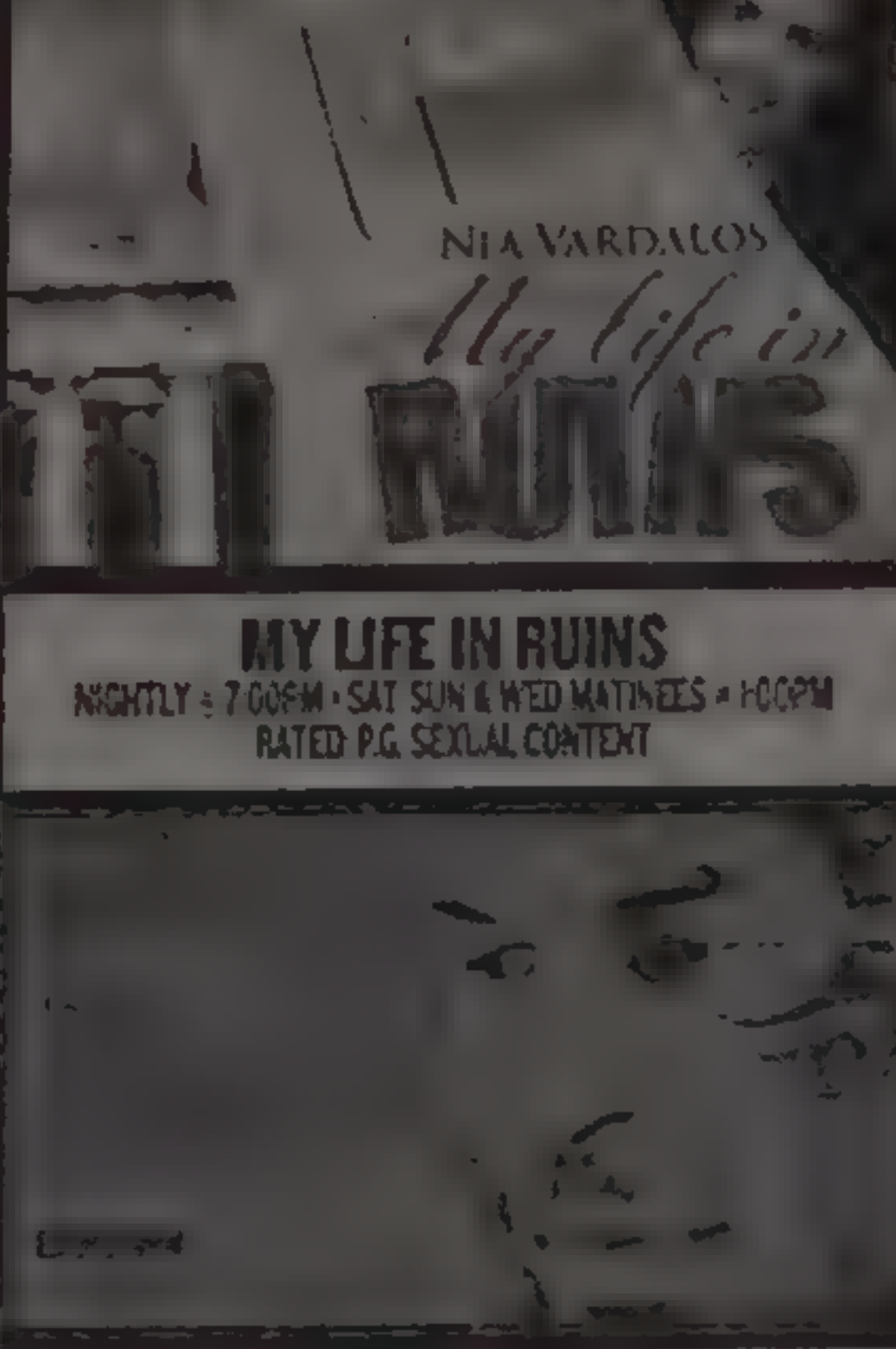
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FOR LOCATIONS AND SHOWTIMES

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THE BROTHERS BLOOM
NIGHTLY - 6:53 & 9:00PM • SAT SUN & WED MATINEES - 2:00PM
RATED PG COARSE LANGUAGE VIOLENCE

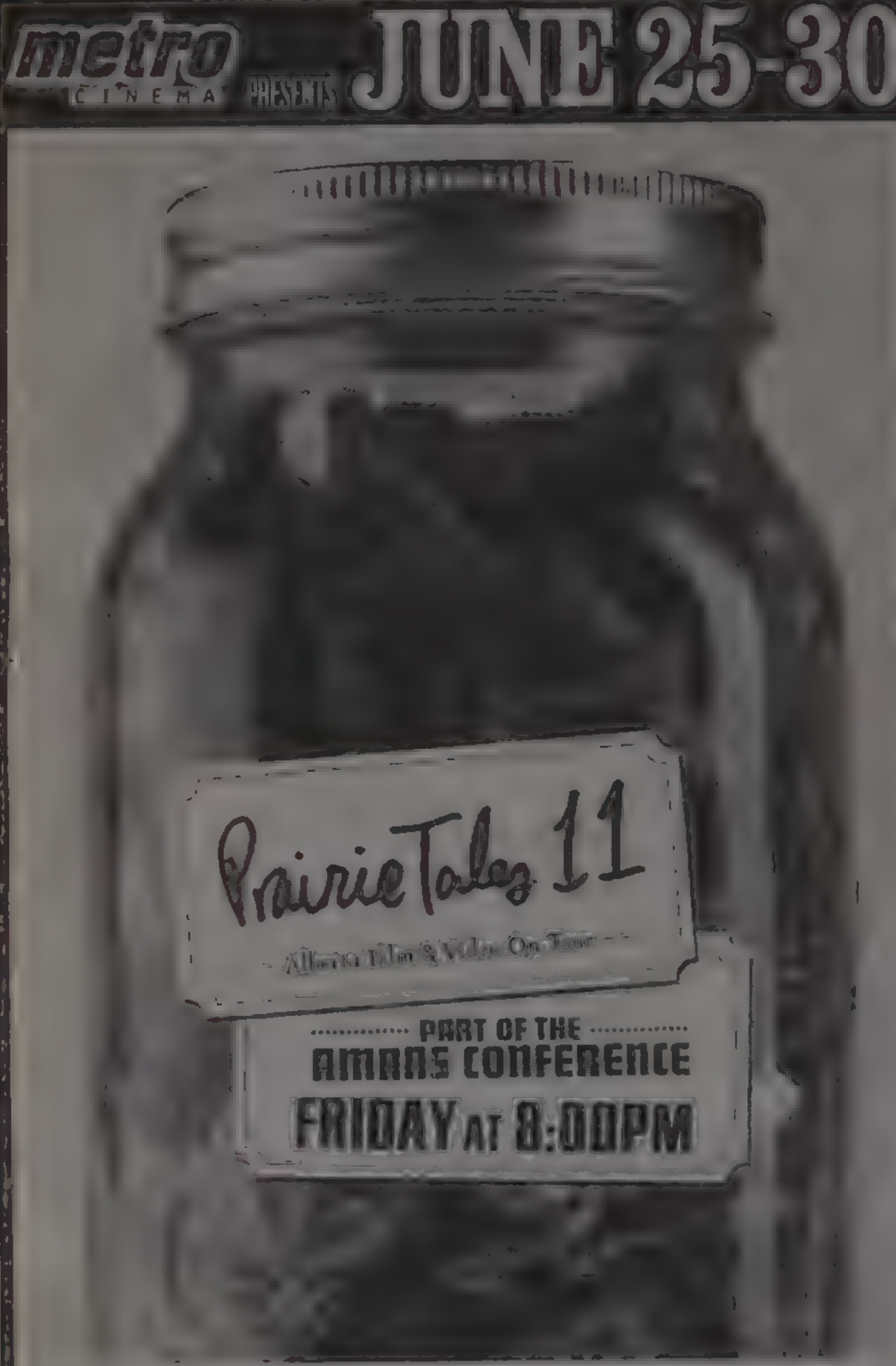
PRINCESS THEATRE
10337 - Whyte Ave. - 433-0728



MY LIFE IN RUINS
NIGHTLY - 7:00PM • SAT SUN & WED MATINEES - 1:00PM
RATED PG SEXUAL CONTENT

TYSON
NIGHTLY - 9:00PM • SAT SUN & WED MATINEES - 3:00PM
RATED 14A NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN

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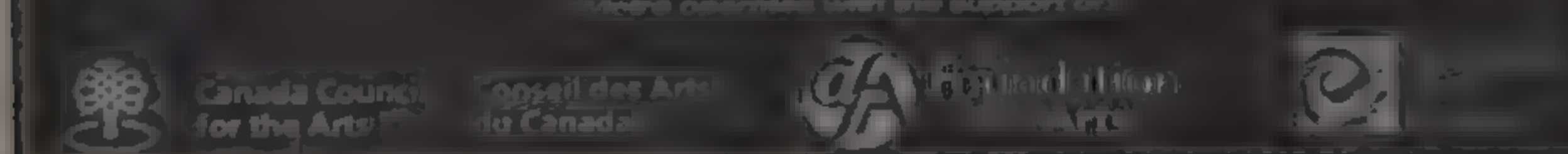
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FILM REVIEWS Film Capsules

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Prairie Tales 11

Presented by AMAAS, Metro Cinema
Fri, Jun 26 (8 pm)
Metro Cinema (9828 - 101A Ave)
★★★★☆

Each year, wild rose films are anthologized in the **Prairie Tales** mini-fest. As always, it boasts the finest in Alberta short films, cinematic experiments and music videos. Metro Cinema, who produces it each time with Alberta Media Arts Alliance Society, is always sure to include a genre variety, which is why the sudden leap from *I Am* (Donna Kay's photographic music video about Aboriginal people's evolving presence) to *Intergalactic Who's Who* (a cartoon about extraterrestrial vegetation) can be so discombobulating.

But aside from its tendency to transition like a bad mixtape, the chosen 16 were mostly thoughtfully selected. Mostly. *Video Game Players Union*, a stop-motion late night talk show with a Halo action figure as guest, is mildly funny, but feels like it was made for YouTube. (In fact, you can find it on YouTube: tinyurl.com/m6be5x.) Another uninspired blah is *Transient Bodies*, an extended collage of cool imagery that never amounts to what it claims to be: "The Internet depicted as a chaotic virtual world in which diverse voices speaking simultaneously create a fog of linguistic confusion."

The few lulls aside, there is much to be proud of at **Prairie Tales**. *Midnight Matinee*, a locally made and NFB-funded stop-motion story about the secret life of an

old film camera was one of my favourites; I'm willing to bet this will be nominated for a Genie next year. *Baby Boots*, which, despite its tendency to trivialize the handicapped lead's obstacles, is stunningly well-acted, while *Visages* is the first movie to make me sympathize with the terrible life of a miniature wooden puppet on a stop-motion movie set. As well, besides being wonderfully witty, *The Secret Lives of Robots* carries a tight narrative all the way to its droll surprise ending.

The latter is unique in that it has a solid narrative story. Most of the others don't, and it's not always because of that "experimental" label. Last weekend I caught the *Filmfest@Nexfest* and had similar thoughts. In a technical sense, the films are well-made. Digital video has allowed smart film makers to create pieces of art that are visually spectacular on small budgets. With the right lighting and right team, a fringe movie can actually have a shot at being taken seriously by most movie-goers. However, without believable actors and a creative script, the experience is always incomplete. Some of my favourite prairie shorts, like *Baby Boots* and *Visages*, took me to the edge of a cliff but were too anticlimactic to pull me over it. (It's not good when a music video such as Wendy McNeill's *Prairie Torch Song* contains more plot than it's filmic counterparts.)

But that's about the only noticeable similarity here. Anyone looking to **Prairie Tales** for an Albertan motif—a solemnness, a bareness, a drunkenness, a cow-tipping-ness—is not going to find it. These outsider (and, sadly, sometimes insider, too) expectations are best confronted and mocked in Trevor Anderson's over-the-top blend of video and animation, *The Island*.

I'm guessing the working title was *Fag-got Island*, because that's how Anderson—the narrator and on-screen explorer of a tundra that changes its geography at the mention of his words—refers to the homoerotic utopia that a piece of American hate mail tells him to go to. A place where he and fellow fags can give each other AIDS, then worship the infected as higher-thans. The darkly funny film, which premiered at Berlin International Film Festival, is the perfect destroyer of misconceptions that filmmakers should be exporting to other countries. Or at least to other provinces.

OMAR MOULLEM

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Now Playing

Year One

Directed by Harold Ramis
Written by Ramis, Gene Stupnitsky,
Lee Eisenberg
Starring Jack Black, Michael Cera
★★★★☆

It's left ambiguous as to whether the forbidden fruit consumed by portly Paleolithic hunter Zed (Jack Black) near the start of *Year One* actually bestows its eat-

ers with divine knowledge. But it's worth noting that after gobbling these honey-dipped orbs, which resemble Christmas tree ornaments and seem to possess hallucinogenic properties, Zed will question his people's most deeply rooted beliefs, invent applause and resolve a riot that threatens to topple Sodom. (He'll also, apparently, travel through time.) Zed's exile from his brethren may not lead him to found his promised "Muscle Tribe of Danger and Excellence," but with the aid of his slight young sidekick Oh (Michael Cera), he will be present for a numerous quasi-historical events such as Cain's slaying of Abel, the ideation of circumcision and Abraham's near-slaying of Isaac, the sacrifice prevented not by God's intervention but Zed's. It's no wonder Oh, encouraged by Zed's precocious doubts, begins questioning the existence of God altogether.

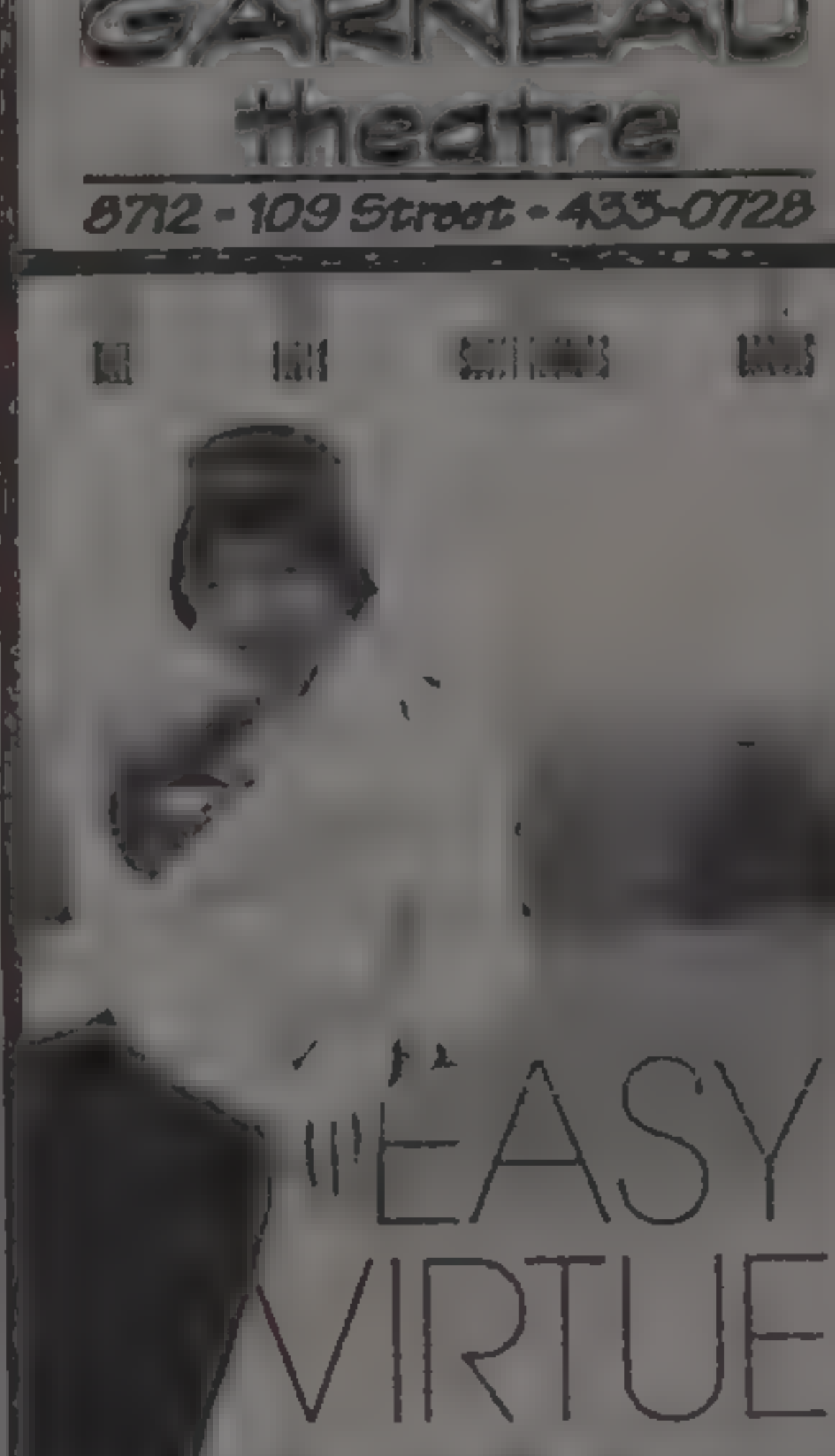
If *Year One* focused more on Zed and Oh's pursuit of skepticism and heresy it may have been more satisfying as a narrative while maintaining its good-natured, amusingly picaresque tone. (Maybe we could have had a smarter, more entertaining and less condescending version of *Religulous*.) But writer/director Harold Ramis and co-scripters Gene Stupnitsky and Lee Eisenberg have opted to shuffle almost aimlessly from gag to gag, and few of these gags would work at all were it not for the fun duo of Black and Cera, whose pairing invokes a sort of reverse Quixote and Panza, though neither of them seem to break a sweat here. Whether eating shit, nearly getting sodomized by Sodomites or getting car sick from riding in a donkey-drawn cart that goes slower than pedestrians, there's a lot that's almost funny here.

Comedy, especially of the dopier variety, is dependent on timing, and I think if *Year One* fails to generate the desired number of laughs—the audience I watched it with certainly seemed more sedate than one would expect for such fare—it may also simply come down to basic directorial and editorial choices. Judging from the number of scenes that cut out just as something spectacular is ostensibly about to happen—such as Oh getting rescued by Zed from becoming lunch for snakes or cougars—its possible Ramis simply lacked coverage. Yet it's just as likely that the coverage he did get just didn't serve the scenes. There are numerous dialogue sequences comprised of far too many close-ups, and as Ramis keeps cutting from one to another it seemed to me that something in the comedy was getting lost, or at least severely dissipated in the lack of interplay. But it's equally true that the brand of comedy that distinguishes *Year One* may just be too stale for 2009, a sensibility so outdated they actually resorted to putting a blooper reel over the credits, a technique that even Jackie Chan has surely abandoned.

JOSEF BRAUN

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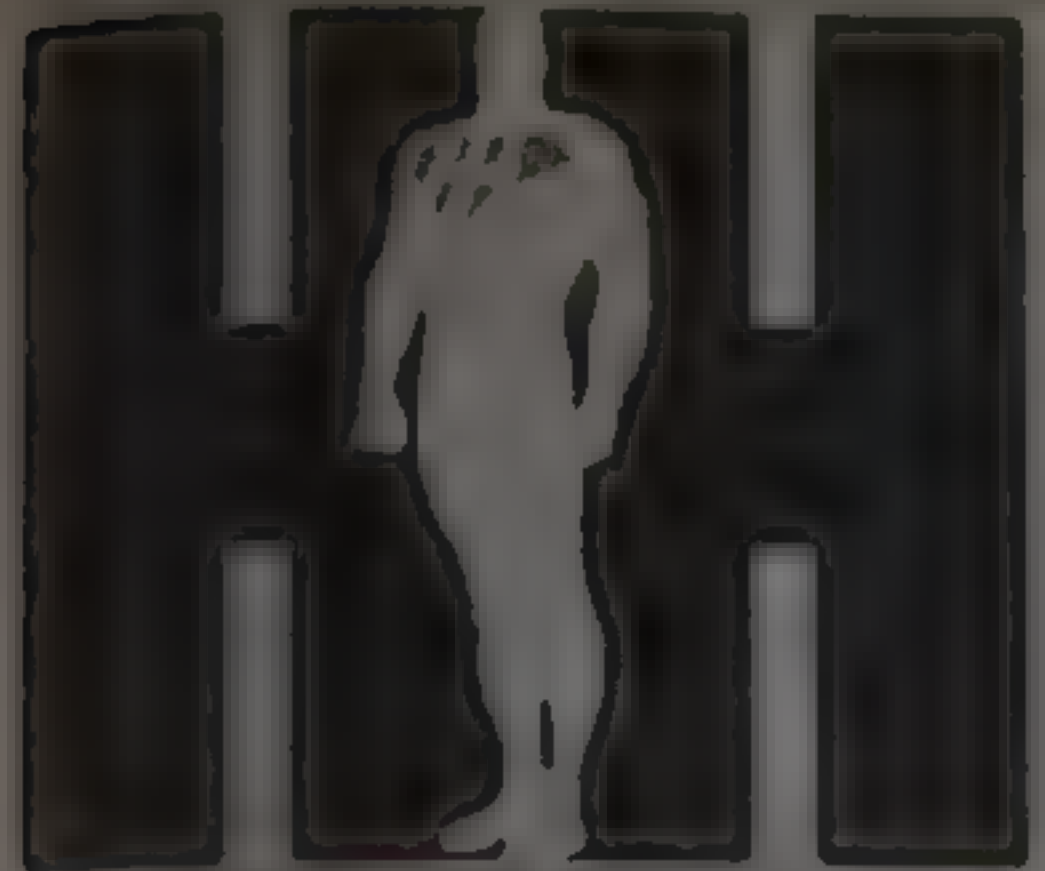
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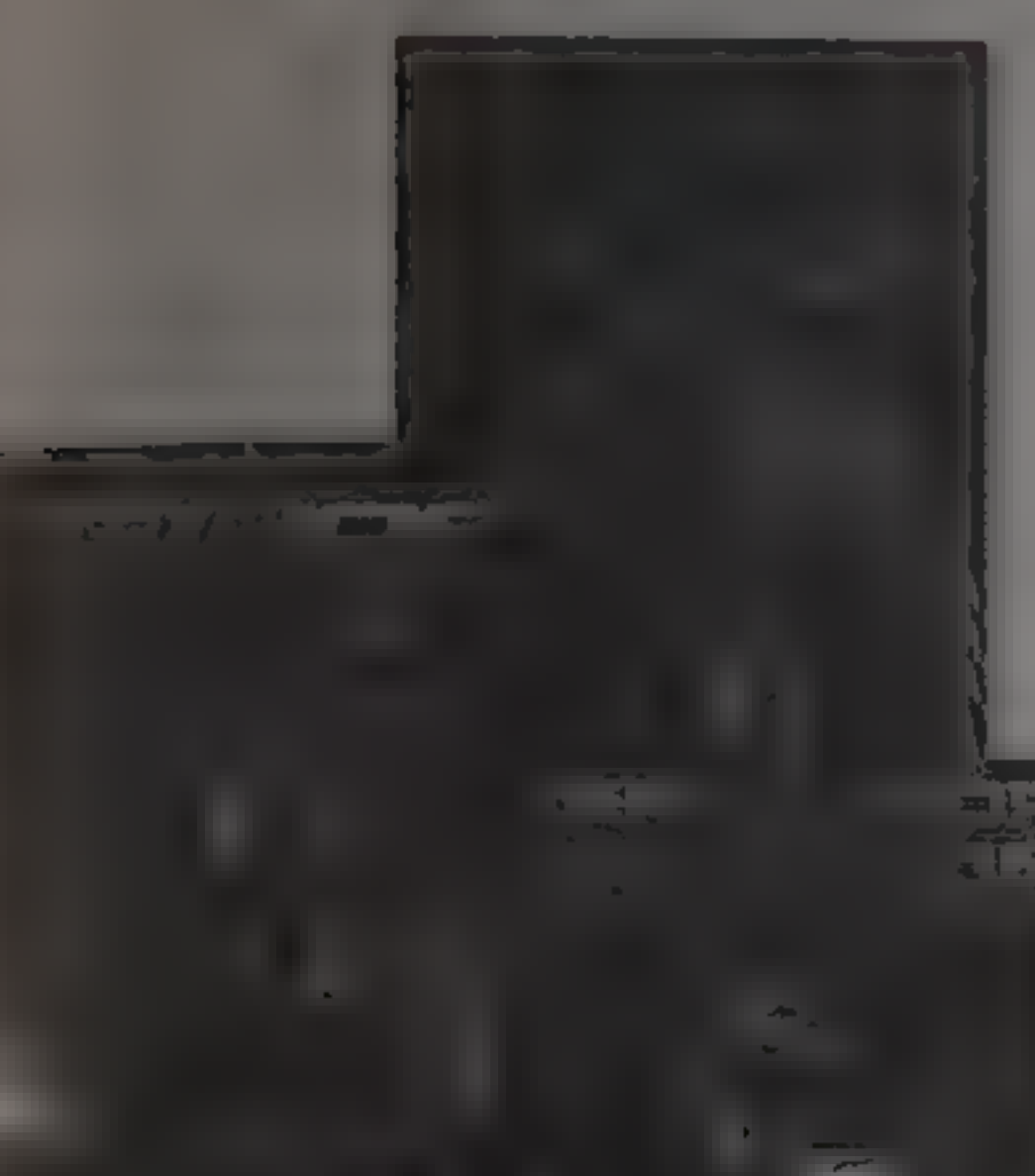




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UP (G)
 Daily 6:30, 9:30; Daily matinee's start Sat June 27 at 1:30pm
TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 Daily 6:30, 9:30; Daily matinee's start Sat June 27 at 1:30pm

EDMONTON FILM SOCIETY

Royal Alberta Museum, 101 Ave, 780.421.7020

GOOD NEWS (STC) Mon, June 29 8:00

CINEMA CITY MOVIES 12

5074-130 Ave, 780.472.9779

GHOSTS OF GIRLFRIENDS PAST (PG, language may offend, not recommended for children)
 Fri-Sat 12:15, 4:15, 6:50, 9:25, 11:40; Sun-Thu 12:15, 4:15, 6:50, 9:25

X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE (14A, violence, not recommended for children)
 Fri-Sat 1:50, 4:30, 7:15, 9:50, 12:10; Sun-Thu 1:50, 4:30, 7:15, 9:50

OBSESSED (14A)
 Fri-Sat 1:10, 4:00, 7:30, 10:00, 12:10; Sun-Thu 1:10, 4:00, 7:30, 10:00

FIGHTING (14A)
 Fri-Sat 1:45, 4:25, 7:05, 9:55, 12:20; Sun-Thu 1:45, 4:25, 7:05, 9:55

STATE OF PLAY (14A)
 Daily 1:05, 4:05, 6:45, 9:40

T7 AGAIN (PG, crude content)
 Fri-Sat 12:15, 4:40, 7:15, 9:25, 11:35; Sun-Thu 12:15, 4:40, 7:15, 9:25

HANNAH MONTANA: THE MOVIE (G)
 Fri-Sat 1:40, 4:30, 7:05, 9:30, 11:50; Sun-Thu 1:40, 4:30, 7:05, 9:30

FAST AND FURIOUS (14A)
 Fri-Sat 1:55, 4:45, 7:10, 9:35, 12:00; Sun-Thu 1:55, 4:45, 7:10, 9:35

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (G)
 Fri-Sat 1:30, 4:20, 7:00, 9:15, 11:30; Sun-Thu 1:30, 4:20, 7:00, 9:15

I LOVE YOU, MAN (14A, coarse language, crude content)
 Fri-Sat 12:15, 4:15, 7:30, 9:55, 12:15; Sun-Thu 12:15, 4:15, 7:30, 9:55

KNOWING (14A, frightening scenes, violence)
 Daily 12:00, 4:20, 6:55, 9:45

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN (PG)
 Daily 2:00, 4:35, 6:50, 9:20

CINEPLEX ODEON NORTH

10000 Steeles Ave. N., 780.471.2224

MY SISTERS KEEPER (14A)
 Daily 12:00, 4:00, 6:50, 9:30

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 No passes Daily 11:50, 12:20, 12:50, 2:15, 3:20, 3:45, 4:15, 6:15, 6:45, 7:15, 7:45, 9:45, 10:15, 10:45

YEAR ONE (14A, crude content)
 Daily 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:30

THE PROPOSAL (PG, coarse language)
 Fri-Tue, Thu 12:40, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50; Wed 4:10, 7:00, 9:50; Star and Strollers Screening: Wed 1:00

THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123 (14A, violence, coarse language)
 Daily 1:00, 3:50, 7:20, 10:05

THE HANGOVER (18A, language may offend, nudity, crude content)
 Daily 12:40, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:40

UP IN DISNEY DIGITAL 3D (G)
 Digital 3d Daily 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN (PG)
 Fri-Tue 12:10, 3:40, 6:30, 8:50

TERMINATOR SALVATION (14A)
 Daily 1:50, 4:40, 7:35, 10:25

ANGELS AND DEMONS (14A, violence)
 Digital Cinema Fri-Tue 12:30, 3:30, 6:40, 9:40

STAR TREK (PG, violence)
 Fri-Tue 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:10

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS (G)
 No passes Wed-Thu 12:10, 3:40, 6:30, 9:00; Digital 3d, No passes Wed-Thu 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:10

PUBLIC ENEMIES (14A, violence)
 No passes Wed-Thu 12:15, 3:30, 7:10, 10:20

CINEPLEX ODEON SOUTH

10000 Steeles Ave. S., 780.471.2224

MY SISTERS KEEPER (14A)
 Fri-Tue 12:45, 3:45, 7:40, 10:20; Wed-Thu 12:40, 3:45, 7:40, 10:20

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 No passes Fri-Tue 11:30, 12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 3:00, 3:20, 4:00, 4:30, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:15; Wed-Thu 11:30, 12:00, 12:30, 12:45, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00, 4:15, 6:30, 7:00, 7:20, 7:45, 9:50, 10:40, 11:00, 11:15

YEAR ONE (14A, crude content)
 Daily 12:00, 4:00, 6:45, 9:45

THE PROPOSAL (PG, coarse language)
 Digital Cinema Fri-Tue 12:10, 4:20, 7:45, 10:35; Wed-Thu

11:10, 4:20, 7:45, 10:35

THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123 (14A, violence, coarse language)
 Fri-Tue 12:50, 3:50, 7:20, 9:40; Wed-Thu 12:50, 3:50, 6:40, 10:25

LAND OF THE LOST (PG, coarse language, crude content)
 Fri, Sun-Tue 11:55, 2:50, 6:40, 9:35; Sat 2:50, 6:40, 9:35

THE HANGOVER (18A, language may offend, nudity, crude content)
 Fri-Tue 12:15, 3:40, 7:50, 10:40; Wed-Thu 12:15, 3:40, 7:50, 10:35

UP IN DISNEY DIGITAL 3D (G)
 Digital 3d Fri-Tue 12:45, 12:40, 2:15, 3:10, 5:00, 6:45, 7:40, 9:30, 10:10; Wed-Thu 12:45, 3:30, 6:45, 9:20

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN (PG)
 Fri-Sun, Tue 12:35, 4:15, 6:50, 9:50; Mon 12:35, 4:15, 9:50

TERMINATOR SALVATION (14A)
 Daily 1:30, 4:40, 7:35, 10:20

ANGELS AND DEMONS (14A, violence)
 Fri-Tue 12:05, 3:15, 6:25, 9:40; Wed 12:05, 3:15, 6:20, 9:40; Thu 4:00, 7:05, 10:10; Star and Strollers Screening: Thu 6:00

STAR TREK (PG, violence)
 Fri-Tue 12:40, 2:45, 7:10, 10:45; Wed-Thu 12:40, 2:45, 6:50, 10:45

METROPOLITAN OPERA: I PURITANI (Classification not available)
 Sat 11:00

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS (G)
 Digital 3d, No passes Wed-Thu 12:45, 12:15, 2:15, 2:45, 5:00, 5:30, 7:30, 8:00, 10:00, 10:30

PUBLIC ENEMIES (14A, violence)
 No passes Wed-Thu 12:35, 4:15, 7:35, 10:50

CITY CENTRE 5

10200-102 Ave, 780.421.7020

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 No passes, Stadium seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Fri-Sun 12:15, 12:45, 3:45, 4:15, 7:15, 7:45, 10:45, 11:15; Mon-Tue 12:15, 12:45, 3:45, 4:15, 7:15, 7:45, 10:45; Wed-Thu 12:15, 12:30, 3:45, 4:00, 7:00, 7:15, 10:30

UP (G)
 RealD 3d, Digital Presentation Fri-Tue 12:30, 3:30, 7:00, 9:45

THE PROPOSAL (PG, coarse language)
 No passes, Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Fri-Tue 1:00, 4:00, 7:30, 10:30; Wed-Thu 1:00, 3:50, 7:10, 10:20

THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123 (14A, violence, coarse language)
 Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Fri-Tue 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30; Wed-Thu 9:50

AWAY WE GO (14A, language may offend, mature theme)
 DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Tue 12:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:15; Wed 12:20, 4:20, 7:20; Thu 12:20, 4:20

YEAR ONE (14A, crude content)
 DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Tue 12:40, 3:15, 8:00, 11:00; Wed-Thu 12:40, 3:40, 6:40, 9:15

MY SISTERS KEEPER (14A)
 No passes, Stadium seating, DTS Digital Fri-Tue 12:00, 3:00, 6:45, 10:00; Wed-Thu 12:00, 3:00, 7:30, 10:15

THE HANGOVER (18A, language may offend, nudity, crude content)
 Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Digital Fri-Tue 12:15, 3:50, 6:40, 9:15; Wed-Thu 1:30, 4:00, 6:50, 9:30

PUBLIC ENEMIES (14A, violence)
 Dolby Stereo Digital, No passes, Stadium Seating Wed-Thu 12:00, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS (G)
 Digital 3d, No passes Wed-Thu 12:30, 3:30, 7:00, 10:00

CLAREVIEW 10

10000 Steeles Ave. N., 780.471.2224

UP (G)
 RealD 3d Fri 4:20, 7:00, 9:30; Sat-Tue 12:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:30; Wed-Thu 12:40, 4:20, 7:05, 9:30

THE HANGOVER (18A, language may offend, nudity, crude content)
 Fri 4:50, 7:20, 9:55; Sat-Thu 2:00, 4:50, 7:20, 9:55

THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123 (14A, violence, coarse language)
 Fri 4:15, 7:05, 9:50; Sat-Tue 1:50, 4:25, 7:05, 9:50

THE PROPOSAL (PG, coarse language)
 No Passes Fri 4:00, 6:55, 9:35; Sat-Sun 1:00, 4:00, 6:55, 9:35; Mon-Tue 1:00, 4:00, 6:55, 9:35; Wed-Thu 1:00, 4:00, 6:55, 9:40

YEAR ONE (14A, crude content)
 Fri 4:15, 6:45, 9:25; Sat-Tue 12:45, 4:15, 6:45, 9:25; Wed-Thu 12:20, 4:05, 6:35, 9:25

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 No passes Fri 3:15, 3:50, 6:40, 7:10, 10:00, 10:30; Sat-Sun 12:00, 12:30, 3:25, 3:50, 6:40, 7:10, 10:00, 10:30; Mon-Thu 12:00, 12:30, 3:25, 3:50, 6:40, 7:10, 10:00

MY SISTERS KEEPER (14A)
 No passes Fri, Mon 4:10, 6:50, 9:45; Sat-Sun, Tue-Thu 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:45; Red Babies: no passes Mon 1:00

STAR TREK (PG, violence)
 Sun-Tue 12:50, 3:45, 6:35, 9:40

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS (G)
 No Passes Wed-Thu 12:10, 3:40, 6:30, 9:00; Digital 3d: No passes Wed-Thu 12:50, 2:10, 4:30, 7:00, 9:35

PUBLIC ENEMIES (14A, violence)
 No passes Wed-Thu 12:20, 3:30, 6:45, 9:50

BURGON CINEMA - CAMROSE

1401-42 Ave, Camrose, 780.692.2154

UP (G)
 Daily 7:00, 9:00; Sat, Sun, Tue 2:00

THE HANGOVER (18A, crude content, nudity, language may offend)
 Daily 7:30, 9:30; Sat, Sun, Tue, Wed, Thu 2:20

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS (G)
 Starts Wed July 1: 7:00, 9:00; Wed-Thu 2:00

MY SISTERS KEEPER (14A)

Daily 7:15, 9:15; Sat, Sun, Tue, Wed 2:15; Thu 3:00; Movies for Mommy's: Thu July 2: 1:00

PUBLIC ENEMIES (14A, violence)
 Wed-Thu 7:15, 9:15; Wed-Thu 2:15

THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123 (14A, coarse language, violence)
 Fri-Tue 7:15, 9:15; Sat, Sun, Tue 2:15

THE PROPOSAL (PG, coarse language)
 Daily 7:05, 9:15; Sat-Sun 2:05

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 Daily 6:45, 9:30; Sat, Sun, Tue, Wed, Thu 12:45

COLATY - SHERWOOD PARK

2020 Sherwood Drive, 780.416.0550

MY SISTERS KEEPER (14A)
 Daily 12:30, 4:30, 7:20, 10:00

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 No passes Daily 11:30, 12:00, 1:00, 3:00, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 7:00, 9:00, 9:45, 10:15

YEAR ONE (14A, crude content)
 Daily 12:15, 2:30, 4:50, 7:40, 10:25

THE PROPOSAL (PG, coarse language)
 Daily 12:15, 4:15, 7:10, 9:50

THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123 (14A, violence, coarse language)
 Fri-Tue 12:45, 3:45, 7:00, 10:10

THE HANGOVER (18A, language may offend, nudity, crude content)
 Daily 12:45, 4:45, 7:30, 10:15

UP (G)
 Fri 4:40, 7:05, 9:30; Sat-Thu 12:45, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN (PG)
 Fri 4:15, 6:40; Sat-Tue 1:30, 4:15, 6:40

STAR TREK (PG, violence)
 Fri-Tue 9:15

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS (G)
 No passes Wed-Thu 11:50, 2:20, 4:55, 7:15, 9:40

PUBLIC ENEMIES (14A, violence)
 No passes Wed-Thu 12:10, 3:20, 6:45, 10:10

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert, 780.458.0001

DATE OF RELEASE ONLY THU, JUNE 25

IMAGINE THAT (G)

Thu, June 25 3:10, 7:10

LAND OF THE LOST (PG, coarse language, crude content)
 Thu, June 25 12:15, 5:15, 9:10

THE HANGOVER (18A, crude content, nudity, language may offend)
 Thu, June 25 12:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:20, 9:20

UP (G)
 Thu, June 25 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

YEAR ONE (14A, crude content)
 No passes Thu, June 25 1:30, 3:30, 5:25, 7:30, 9:25

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 No passes Thu, June 25 12:40, 3:45, 6:30, 9:15

LEBUC CINEMAS

Lebuc, 780.352.3922

THE PROPOSAL (PG, coarse language)
 Daily 12:55, 3:20, 6:55, 9:20

THE HANGOVER (18A, crude content, nudity, language may offend)
 Fri-Tue 1:00, 3:30, 7:00, 9:30

TAKING OF PELHAM 123 (14A, coarse language, violence)
 Daily 1:10, 3:25, 7:10, 9:25

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 Daily 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:45

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS (G)
 Starts Wed, July 1, Daily 1:05, 3:25, 7:05, 9:25

PUBLIC ENEMIES (14A, violence)
 Starts Wed, July 1: Daily 1:00, 3:35, 7:00, 9:35

METRO CINEMA

9422-101A Ave, Citadel Theatre, 780.425.9212

PRAIRIE TALES II (STC)
 Fri 8:00

FEARLESS SUPERHERO
 Mon Jun 29: 7pm

PARKLAND CINEMA 7

130 Century Crossing, Spruce Grove, 780.972.2132; Serving Spruce Grove, Stearns Plains, Parkland County

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG, violence, crude content, not recommended for young children)
 Daily 6:45, 9:30; Sat, Sun, Tue, Wed, Thu 12:45, 3:30

ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS (G)
 Wed, July 1: 12:55, 3:00, 6:55, 9:00; Thu, July 2: 12:55, 3:00, 6:55, 9:00; not presented in 3D*

PUBLIC ENEMIES (14A, violence)
 Starts Wed, July 1: Phone cinema for times

YEAR ONE (14A, crude content)



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Gypsophilia

43

The Evaporators

44

Les Claypool

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Vuefinder

Live show slide shows. This week: Gab'n and King Sunny Adé.

COVER // THE RURAL ALBERTA ADVANTAGE

Meet me there again, under the lights at the Leg

Edmonton ex-pat Nils Edenloff had to leave before he could appreciate what growing up in Alberta meant

DAVID BERRY

// DAVID@VUEWEEKLY.COM

Alberta isn't the easiest of places in which to live. Our governing dynasty employs people who make national headlines with asinine comments almost weekly. Oil and oil money blights the landscape, both physical and psychological, our northern climes literally reduced to wasteland while our cities sprawl to accommodate the suburban mini-mansions and trucks paid for with rig money. We'd rather spend our public money on highways and world's largest to line them than health or education or art. To top it off, those of us that stick around get to watch the government and other intelligent people to pastures figuratively and literally greener.

So maybe, then, we should perk up our ears towards the Rural Alberta Advantage for no other reason than to remind ourselves of the good we do have. As the name of the band implies, it writes songs about the Albertan hinterland: specifically, punishingly raw, melodically intricate heartbreakers that wail about lost nights at the Leg, scream about leaving hearts in Lethbridge and get crushed under the emotional weight of the Frank slide.

The narrative setting is no act of cultural tourism (if Alberta is really a place for such things), either. Although drummer Paul Banwatt and multi-instrumentalist Amy Cole have always called the band's Ontario digs home, lyricist/singer/guitarist Nils Edenloff is of the Alberta stock: born and postsecondary educated in Edmonton, with a high school spent in Fort McMurray and summers in the Rockies and at lake cabins, he's singing of what he knows.

But while the nostalgic longing that fills Edenloff's voice and words throughout the band's stunning debut, appropriately titled *Hometowns*, is unmistakable, obviously it wasn't always this way: he is one of the ones who left, after all. Although he insists that, at the time, it was nothing personal: it wasn't so much about getting out of Alberta as it was getting out of the place where he had spent his entire life.

At the time, I felt like I was in a rut: I was done school, things weren't really working out, and I basically figured I could stick around and keep doing the same old thing until I was 30, or maybe I could just pick up and go somewhere else," he explains over the phone from Toronto, prepping for the longest tour the band has embarked on to date, and the first one that will bring them back to the place that is their namesake. "It was really more just that sort feeling of wanting to get out of your hometown. It wasn't really anything Edmonton-specific—I just needed a change."

Change came in the form of a move to Toronto—a city Edenloff admits with a



FREEDOM TO CREATE >> Nils Edenloff, Amy Cole and Paul Banwatt are the Rural Alberta Advantage. Photo: Fudo (Fu faga, hye, on)

laugh "kicked his ass" at first—but whatever feelings it were that drove him away quickly dissipated. Though he now found body and mind in Hogtown, his heart, as he so simply puts it on *Hometowns*' plaintive-but-energetic opener "The Ballad of the RAA," never moved an inch.

"Once I moved out here, I really realized what kind of an impact that growing up in Alberta had on me," he explains in a manner that's both sincerely thoughtful and direct in the way of someone who's obviously had to think about just what kind of impact Alberta has had an awful lot over the past little while. "I don't think I would have realized that quite as readily if I hadn't moved out here. I think it's that you sort of have to leave your hometown before you really start to love it, or at least realize what you love about it."

And yet, as central as the Albertan landscape is to the band's ethos—and as provincially endearing as it can be to hear someone namecheck the spaces you inhabit—to limit the band's appeal to a geographical level would be myopically unjust. As its status as most-downloaded band on eMusic—where a November feature catapulted the group beyond the Toronto scene—or the band's much-buzzed-about SXSW show opening up for indie darlings Grizzly Bear, or its recent signing to Saddle Creek would attest, you don't need to know where Garneau is to get floored by the RAA's melancholic folk-pop.

Certainly, at least part of the reason for the band's wide appeal is that ideas of leaving a place behind, of moving on to something greater, are applicable no matter where you're from.

"That is pretty universal," points out Edenloff. "I mean, playing for people in the States especially kind of drives that home: the reaction is usually, 'I don't know where Alberta is, but I can really relate to what the songs are about.'"

That's particularly true when you consider how closely the band weaves together the idea of leaving home with the

the apartment; "Frank AB," whose drums and wailing harmonies roll like an avalanche, compares the crushing weight of a break-up to the landmark rock slide; "Four Night Rider" is a dream of impossible mutual escape wrapped in rollicking, punk-tinged pop. If you've never left somewhere, you've at least lost a lover.

"That wasn't really something I thought about a lot at the time," says Edenloff of the connection, noting that, like both subjects, he's needed some distance from the song's initial writings to figure them out. "The band evolved right after my

"I think it's that you sort of have to leave your hometown before you really start to love it, or at least realize what you love about it."

idea of leaving a lover. Though it is the secondary theme of *Hometowns*, parallels between lost cities and lost lovers—the feelings of needing to escape, the necessity of distance to understanding them, the realization of what we've chosen to forget about them and how it's affected us moving forward—are rampant. (In that respect, actually, *Hometowns* seems like the flip side of our own Provincial Archives' similarly haunting *Nameless Places*, which covers the same ground from the perspective of someone who's stuck close to their roots.) The appropriately ethereal first single, "Don't Haunt This Place," ties up the emotions of a lost lover with the presence of their keys in

girlfriend and I broke up, and it was sort of an outlet to vent and, you know, deal with shit, and the Alberta thing kind of tied in because that's the situation I was finding myself in. But as it's gone on, I've definitely started to get that sense of how closely tied-up they were."

All that said, even focusing only on lyrical themes would be to sell the band short. Though Edenloff definitely has a touch for piercingly direct lyrics—"I was holding on to you / But you were holding less / It's not the words it's the ones you stress" he sings on "In the Summertime," which captures its vibe of slowly disappointed love rather succinctly—it's how the band holds

together that really pushes it over the top and has made it stick out thus far. Edenloff's simple melodies and flat vocals—sounds a bit like someone who can't sing, breaking his heart while trying to do so—which has earned him a pickup truckload of not-entirely-accurate comparisons to Neutral Milk Hotel's Jeff Magnum—plus perfectly off Cole's whispery harmonies and keyboard plunks, while Banwatt (also of TO dance-rockers Woodhands) pushes the drums to the outer limits of pop, finding some otherworldly balance of his dancier, hip-hopier roots and just the right amount of sparse accompaniment.

This comfort with each other, a kind of intuitive sense of what each needs to be doing on the song, expending minimal effort for maximum effect, was honed at a Toronto open mic night Edenloff and Banwatt hosted. Sparsely attended, it gave the band plenty of time to get comfortable with each other.

"It was really depressing; no one would come out, and it was sort of a soul-sucking experience. At the time, though, neither of us had a girlfriend or anything, and basically no reason to say no to a bar and some beer on a Tuesday night," he explains. "But we ended up having the fortunate experience of going through those growing pains and figuring out what works for us in front of the bar staff. I think it really helped us find a voice, find a way of saying things and playing things that's comfortable and sort of believable."

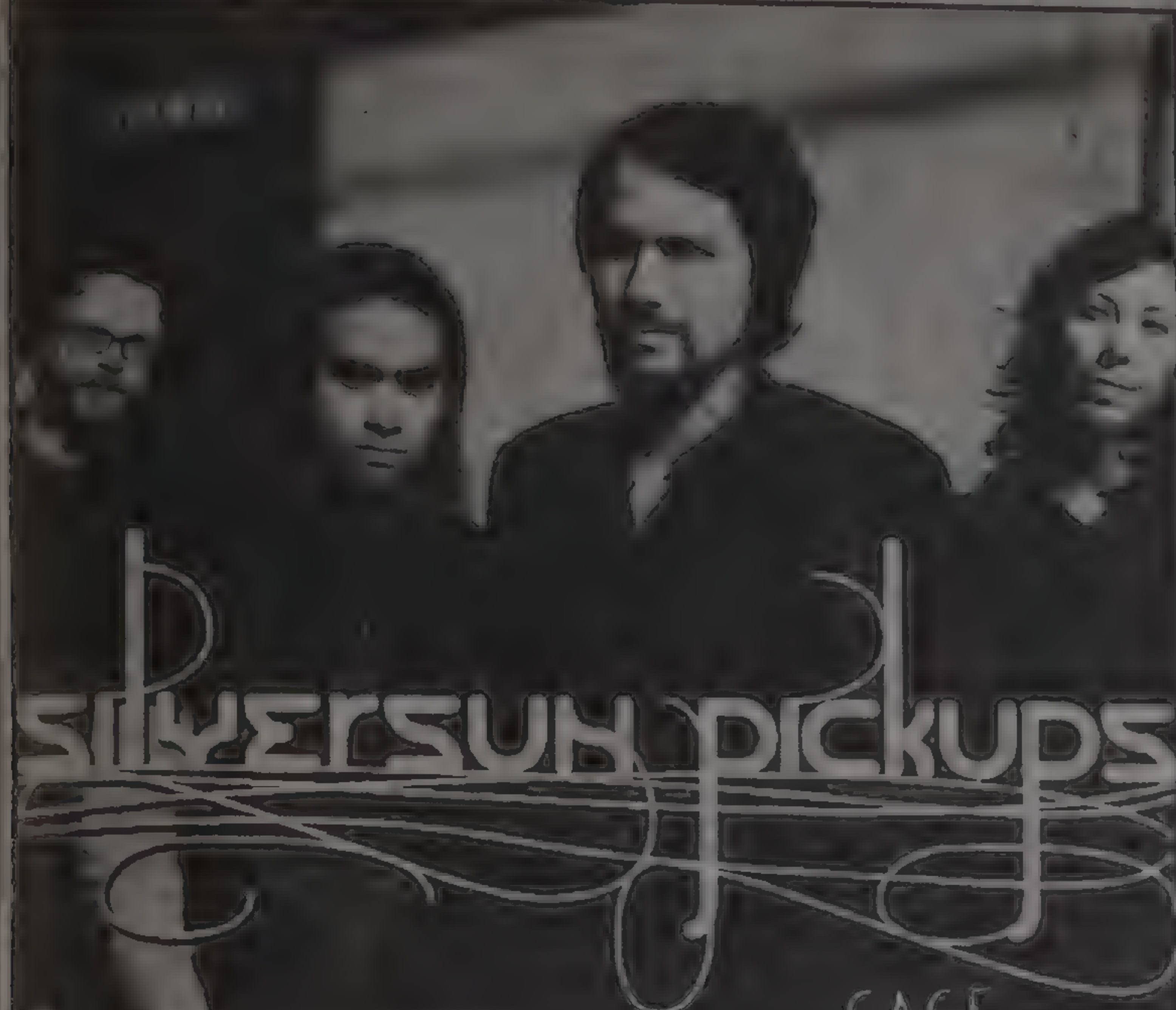
As much as it helped the band, though, for Edenloff it also represents another step in coming to understand the place he left behind: distance is one thing, but finding a group of like-minded collaborators has, as the band's burgeoning success would indicate, given him even further reason and opportunity to explore his roots. It's a curious thing, the fact that the more enmeshed he becomes in his new home, the more he's able to talk about what his old one meant. Not that he ever expects to really leave behind the place where he grew up.

"I've been here for ... I think it's seven and-a-half years now, but I still see myself as an Albertan," he says, laughing a bit at the fact. "When I tell people how long it's been since I moved, though, it's like, 'Dude, you've been here for a while now, hey?'"

"And truthfully, I'm really accustomed to living here—I mean, after seven and-a-half years, God, I'd hope so—but no matter what I do, there's some sort of impact that Alberta had on me and the person I'm going to become. I don't think that's ever going to change, no matter how I evolve." **V**

5/11, JUN 27 (4 PM)

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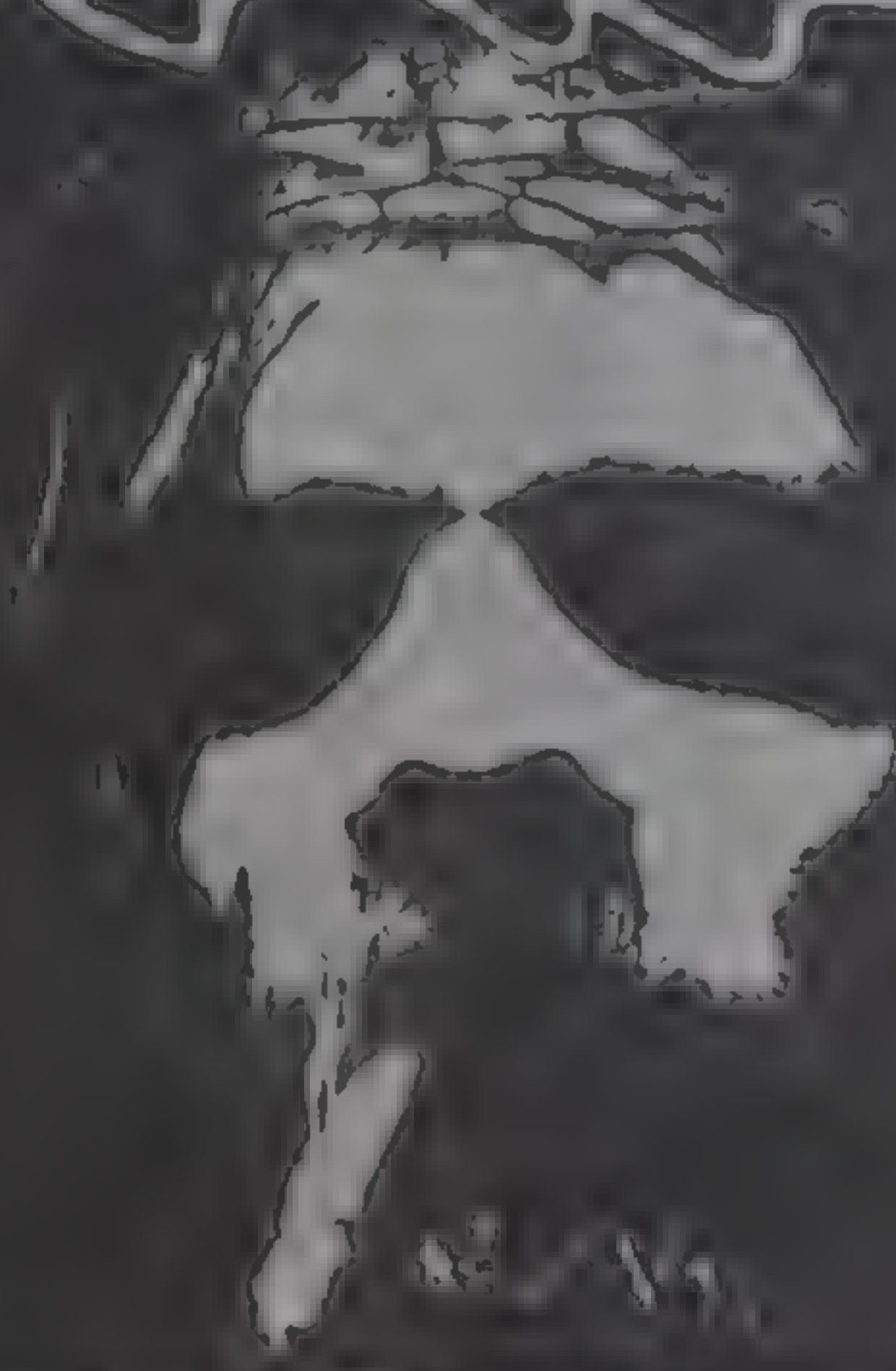
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Who is that masked man?

Sandor continues his undercover marketing investigation

Last week, I had the opportunity to spend some time on air with Lana Gay, the host of CBC Radio 3's "Lanarama." The topic? The album I just put out through TuneCore, the service that accepts an artist's music, sent in the form of WAV files, and distributes the release to all of the major online retailers for what amounts to a relatively small fee.

If you have been following this column over the past couple of months, you know that I am intrigued by the notion of DIY musicians being able to release their music cheaply through services like TuneCore. And I decided to take it to another level, releasing some music I was putting together more or less as a hobby. Putting the album out cost me a grand total of \$52.42 Canadian. Now, I am trying to make that money back.

Which brings me back to the CBC Radio 3 interview. To keep the experiment as pure as it can possibly be, I promised to

only allow myself to promote the project as any indie band would, by posting songs to MySpace, iLike and New Music Canada; by getting friends to listen to the songs. Viral promotion. But, in this column, I haven't revealed my project's name. As a music journalist, it would give me an unfair advantage.

I told Lana the same. Because she was interviewing me as Steven Sandor, *Vue* columnist, I told listeners that, well, they'd have to stumble onto my album. I wasn't going to point them to it. Had Lana heard the album, thought, "Wow" and called me up, then it would be fair game to talk about it and reveal my identity.

But just a couple of weeks in I'm already feeling I live a double life. As a journalist and author, well, my life has always been an open book. So I have to admit that I bit my tongue throughout the interview,

as part of me just wanted to say "check out BAND NAME HERE. Play one of the songs, Lana! Play one of the songs!" (Try imagining that in an Elmo voice. I can. But I have a one-year-old.)

My willpower held out. But I did thread a couple of massive hints in the interview. *Easter eggs*—if you can actually call something said in passing on radio an "Easter egg"—if you will. Funny thing is, I didn't realize that I had laid down those huge hints until after I hung up the phone.

But I will be keeping CBC Radio 3 updated on the progress of the project. I won't have any idea on sales figures for at least another month, so all I can do is Google or Bing my band name and see if there's any interest out there.

For another week, the secret identity is safe. **V**

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of *Vue Weekly*, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

VUEFINDER



HALL Acoustic instrumental old time fiddle jam hosted by the Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers Society; 7pm

ROSE BOWL/ROUGE LOUNGE Rose Bowl Mon Jam hosted by Sherry-Lee Wisor and Darrek Anderson; 8pm

STARLITE ROOM Hollywood Undead, guests; all ages; 7pm; \$26.50 at TicketMaster, Blackbyrd

YARDBIRD SUITE Jazz Festival PJ Perry Quartet; 9pm, \$20 at TIX on the Square, door

DJs

BAR WILD Bar Gone Wild: Service Industry Night; no minors; 9pm-1am

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Main Floor: Eclectic Nonsense, Confederacy of Dunces, Dad Rock, TJ Hookah and Rear Admiral Saunders

BUDDY'S DJ Dust 'n' Time, 9pm

FILTHY MONASTY'S Metal Mondays with DJ S.W.A.G.

FLUID Mon Mixer

NEW CITY Daniel and Fowler (eclectic tunes)

TUESDAY

BLUES ON WHYTE Megan Lane

BRDOX BAR Fear of City, Colt Seavers, the Equation; 9pm (door); \$10 after

CENTRAL PARK LOUNGE Jazz Festival: Solo Piano Series: Tim King; 5-7pm; free

CHURCHILL SQUARE The Works street stage: Dino Domonelli World Group, Kelsey Kulyk and Devon Belcourt, Ensemble Mujurushi, Outdoor Minors, The Mutts, Cockatoo; 12-3:30pm

DRUID Jasper Ave Open stage with Chris Wynters

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE Ferry Corsten (electronic DJ); no minors; 7pm, tickets at TicketMaster

HAVEN Blackout Tues: Joust! and So Serious, guests School's Out launch Party; 8pm (door); no cover

JEFFREY'S Jazz Festival: Rhonda Withnell, 8-11pm; tickets at door

LB'S Ammar's Moosehead Tues open stage; 9pm-1am, hosted by Mark Ammar

MACLAB THEATRE Jazz Festival: Kurt Elling Quartet, Nuf Sed; 7:30pm

NEW CITY My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult

NEW CITY SUBURBS The Rabid Whole, Sangsara, iVardensphere (electronic); no minors; 8pm (door); \$8 (door)

O'BRYNE'S Celtic Jam with Shannon Johnson and friends

PAWN SHOP Red on Whyte Canada Bash II: Drive By Punch, Portal, Greater Than Giants, A Trophy Life; 8pm (door); \$15

RIVER CREE RESORT The Road Hammers; 8pm

SECOND CUP 124 Street Open mic every Tue; 8-10pm

SECOND CUP Stanley Milner Library Open mic; 7-9pm

STARLITE ROOM On Snap Canada Day Party with AC Slater, Kelevra, hosted by Ripade; 9pm (door); \$15 (1st 50 tickets at Foosh); \$20 (next 100); \$25 (after) at TicketMaster, Blackbyrd, Foosh

YARDBIRD SUITE Jazz Festival: Larry Roy, Steve Kirby Quartet; 9pm; \$20 at TIX on the Square, door

6pm; \$20 at TIX on the Square, door

DJs

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Main Floor: CJR's Eddie Lunchpal; Wooltop: with DJ Gundam

BUDDY'S DJ Arrow Chaser; 9pm

ESMERALDA'S Retro every Tue; no cover with student ID

FUNKY BUDDHA Whyte Ave Latin and Salsa music, dance lessons 8-10pm

GINGUR SKY Canada Day Bashment: Vince's BDay Fiesta Pt. 1 on Tue June 30 with DJ Whiteboy, Bomb Squad, Invinible, Capone, Spyce, Rocky; 10pm (door); \$15

HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB Tues-Blackout: Electro beats with Electro DJ's Joust!, So Serious

NEW CITY 'abily, Ghoul-rock, spooky with DJ Vylan Cadaver

RED STAR Tuesdays: Experimental Indie Rock, Hip Hop, Electro with DJ Hot Philly

SPORTSWORLD Retro Night; 7-10:30pm; www.sports-world.ca

WEDNESDAY

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL Canada Day: Billy Wiseman

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Canada Day: DJ Don on the Wooltop patio; 2pm

BLUES ON WHYTE Jasper Lane presented by the Hamilton Blues Society: Can't Be Music Society; every Wed evening

RED PIANO BAR Jazz and Shiraz Wed: Dave Babcock and his Jump Tho

RIVER CREE Wednesdays Live Rock Band hosted by Yukon Jack; 7:30-9pm

SECOND CUP Mountain Equipment Open mic; 8-10pm

SPRUCE GROVE COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL-Sports Field Canada Day main-stage Performers 8pm, Gord Barnard 9:30pm fireworks at 11pm

STEEPS TEA College Plaza Open mic hosted by Ernie Terasgu, 8:30-10pm

TEMPLE Wild Style Wednesday: Live hip hop, every Wed \$4

YARDBIRD SUITE Jazz Festival Roberto Oochipinh Quartet; 9pm, \$20 at TIX on the Square, door

DJs

BANK ULTRA Wed Night with DJ Harley

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Main Floor: Blue Jay's Messy Nest Wed Night with LL Cool Joe

BUDDY'S DJ Dust 'n' Time; 9pm; no cover before 10pm

DIESEL ULTRA Wind-up Wed Canada Day Celebration featuring Whiteboy

FLUID Wednesdays Rock This

LEGENDS Hip hop/R&B with DJ Spincycle

NEW CITY LOUNGE DJ R.oo Slade (indie, punk and meta)

NEW CITY SUBURBS Shake It with Greg Gory and Eddie Lunchpal; no minors; 9pm; \$10 after

NIKKI DIAMONDS Punk and 100% metal

RED STAR Guest DJs

STARLITE ROOM Wild Style Wednesdays: Hip-Hop; 9pm

STOLL'S Beatparty with Rudy Electro, DJ Rystar, Space Age; 9:20am; www.beatparty.net

WUNDERBAR Wednesdays with new DJ; no cover

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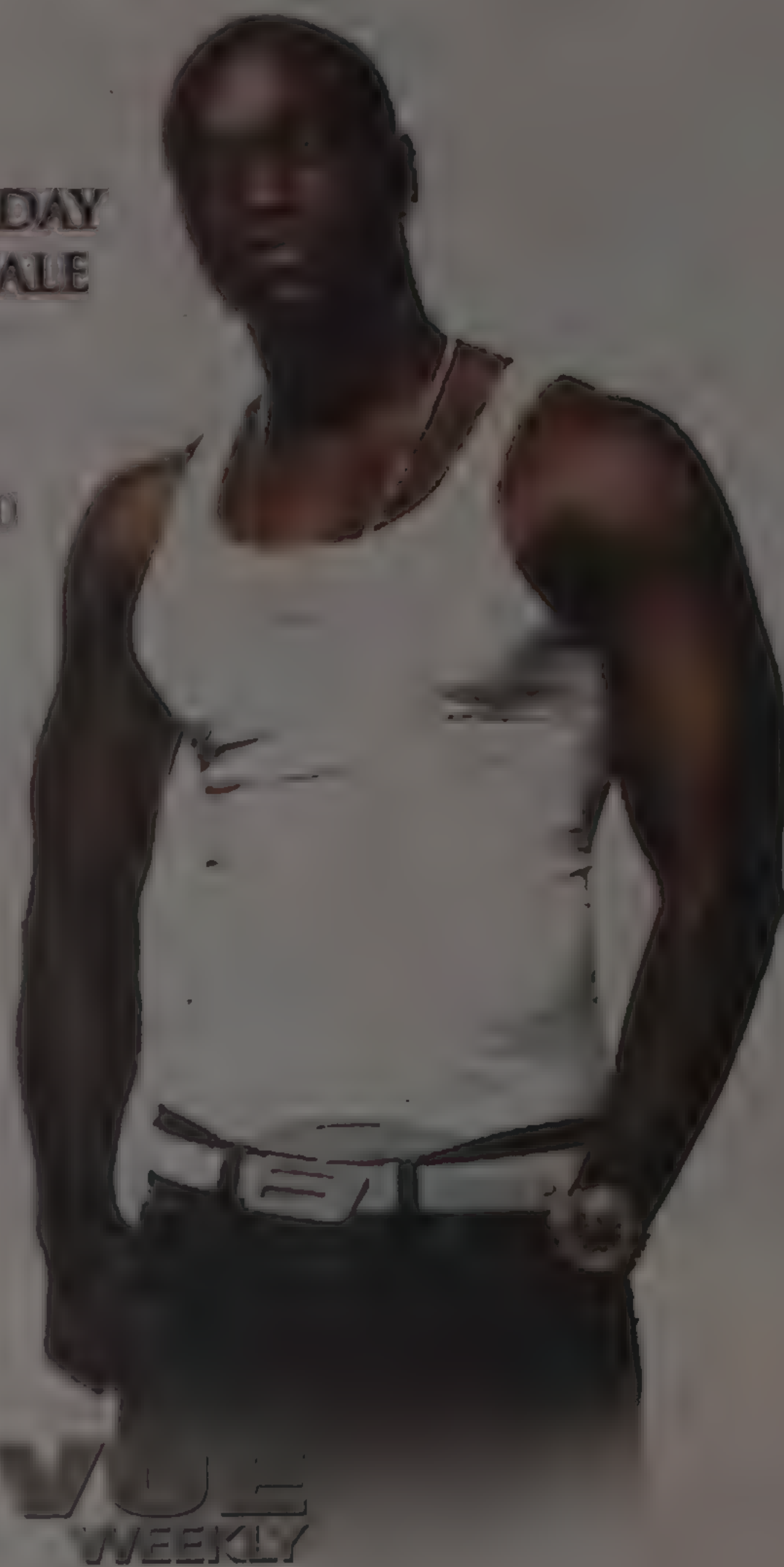
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WEEKLY**

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Trouble walkin'

CKY is still being bad on the road

BY AN RITLES
PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

Though the group has been together for over 10 years, the moniker **CKY** remains apt. Standing for Camp Kill Yourself, CKY remains committed to its interpretation of living life to the fullest, which includes hard partying, skateboarding and rock 'n' roll. The group tours relentlessly and seems to get up to some trouble no matter where it goes.

Answering the phone for a mid-afternoon interview, drummer Jess Margera—older brother to skateboarder and reality show star Bam and son of Phil and April Margera, who became stars in their own right after being pranked repeatedly on their younger brother's television show—sounds groggy. Having been up late the night before with his

bandmates, enjoying the kinds of shenanigans touring musicians often find themselves participating in, Margera is fighting a serious hangover coupled with what sounds like some serious regrets.

"I feel like 27 bucks right now because I went out drinking pretty hard with the boys," he laments. "Our bass guitar player Matt got a lap dance from this chick that looked like Walter Mathau. I think I called her Landslide, like, 'Hey Landslide! Come 'ere.' And then there was another one that was hot, but she probably hasn't been hot since the '80s or early '70s. I kept calling her the Canadian Cougar and she got really mad at me, but she kept hanging around me so I'm like, 'What the hell?'"

Though the members of CKY are partying with each other again, in recent years it was looking less and less likely that they

would. A four-year break between the group's previous album and last month's *Carver City* had some people wondering if the band had packed it in, and while no official announcement was ever made to that effect, Margera admits that at one point the band had basically disbanded.

"We pretty much beat the shit out of each other on tour and it was pretty ugly for about a year. It was '07, we were on tour—you know, we were on tour for about 10 years and it just all caught up to us one night, and it ended bad," he says. "We kind of needed it actually 'cause we took a year off, and taking a year off for vacation is one thing, but taking a year off when you actually think the band is over is another thing—you kind of think, 'Fuck, we had a really awesome thing going on, why did we piss in the well?' So we came back and we were brand new again and had a new fire in our belly. We really worked our ass off on the new album and it was actually fun again."

The break, as well as a little bit of pressure from the band's new label, Roadrunner Records, led CKY to return to the

studio. Having taken such a long break to begin with however, the group was in no mood to rush into releasing *Carver City*. Instead, the band took its time with it, which allowed the members to explore any and all of the ideas they had in the studio. As Margera enthuses, the response has been positive.

"It's been really good—it's kind of crazy because it took four years to make it. In that time you have people that are really rabidly waiting for it and then some people are just like, 'Where the hell have you been?'" he laughs. "We definitely took our time with it and I think it sounds like that—we experimented a lot in the studio which is always fun."

Despite the fact the album has been well-received by CKY's rabid fan base—a fan base that is able to keep in touch with the band through an innovative question-and-answer forum on the group's website—Margera explains that CKY still has trouble getting any radio play. It's not from lack of trying, he says, it's just that the band doesn't easily fit into any specific category

and therefore has a tough time making it onto industry playlists.

"Nothing's easy for us because we don't sound like anything—people don't know what to do with us because we're for real, original, really, no bands sound like us at all," he says. "I have 3000 CDs in my house and I've never heard any bands that sound even remotely like us. It's cool because people appreciate that but at the same time the bigger audience doesn't understand. It's not Green Day-type stuff it's not Nickelback-type stuff so they don't understand it."

"I love that we have a diehard fan base, that's really cool and flattering, but at the same time when it's like, 'How 'bout a little radio love?' Nothing. We don't sound like Nickelback or Theory of a Deadman—I guess people driving to work every day might not understand it." V

FRI, JUN 26 (9 PM)

CKY

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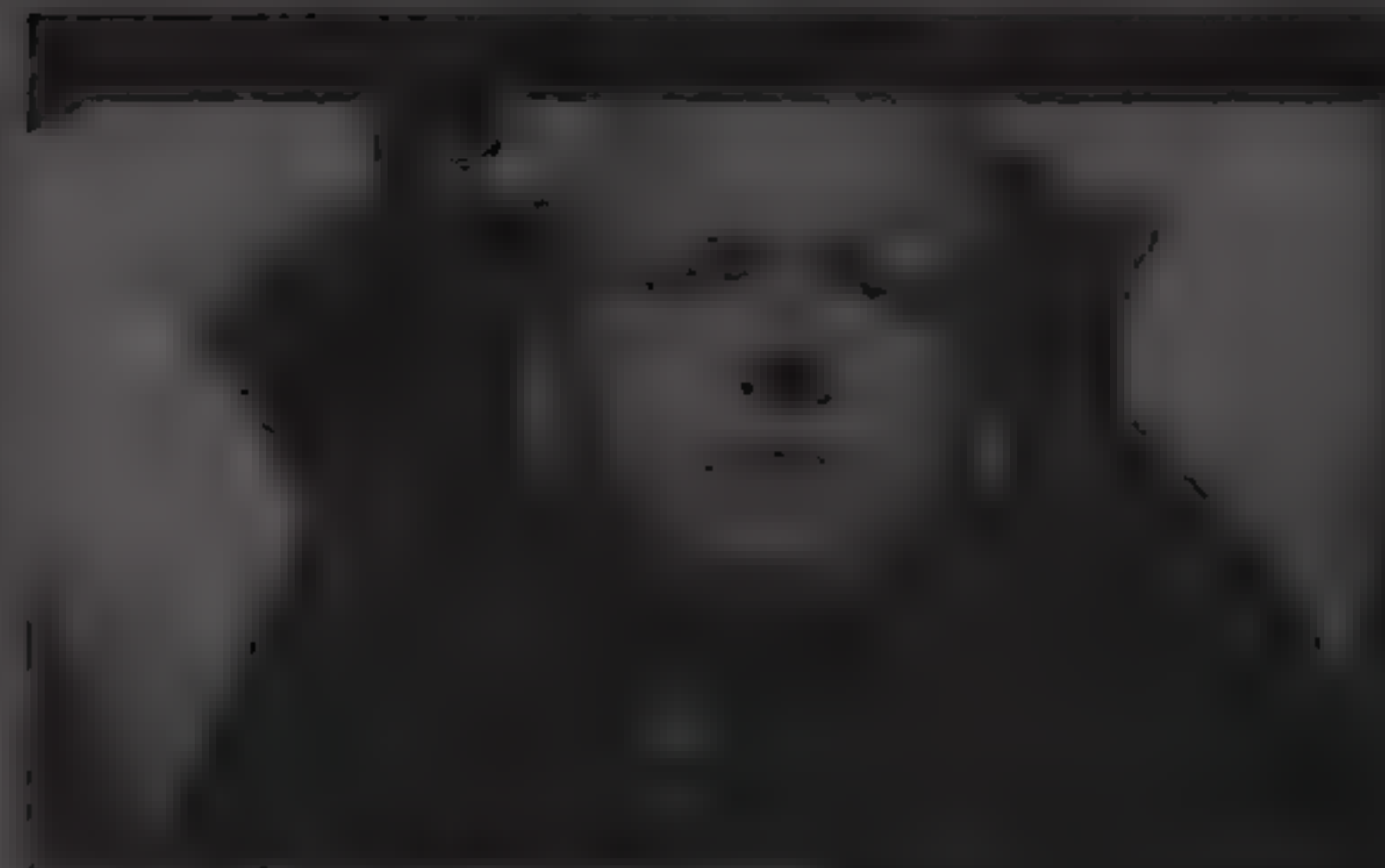
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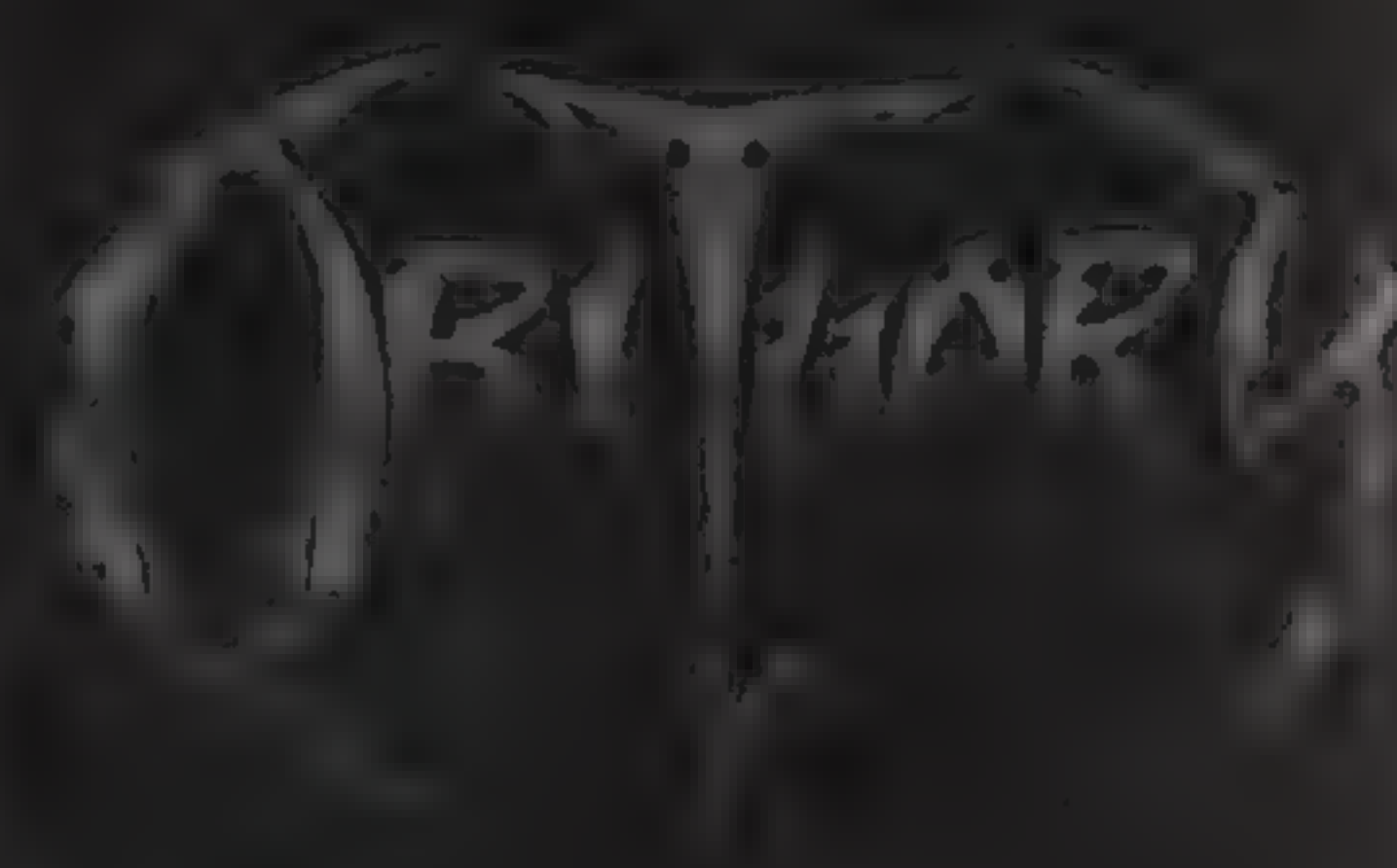
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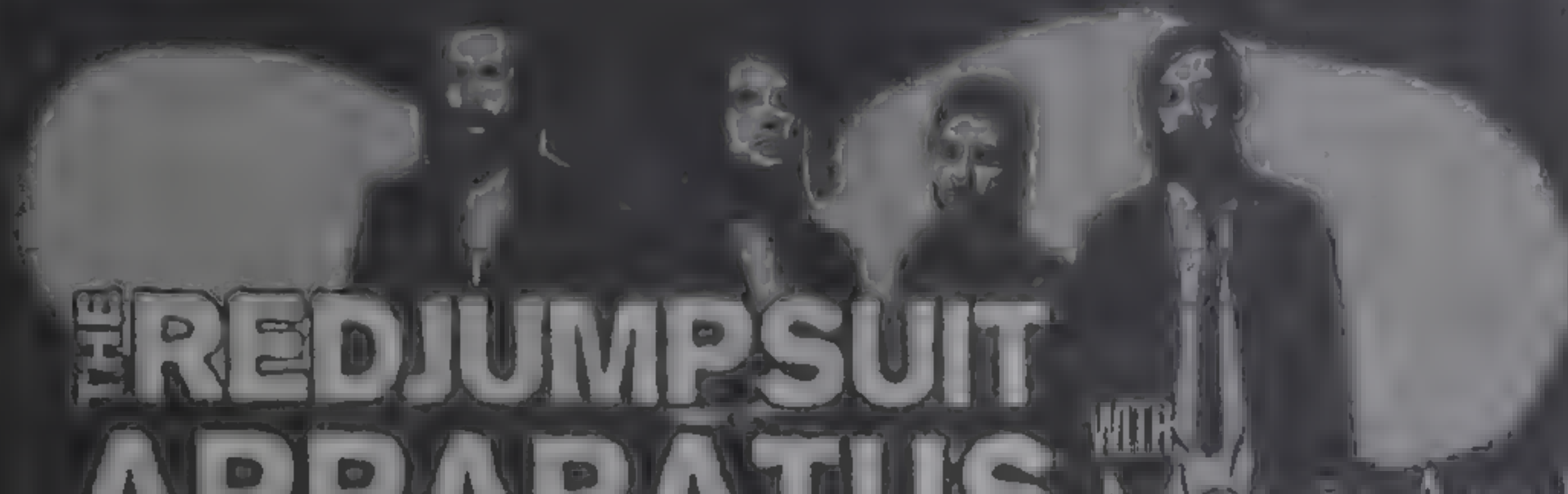
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GIGS THIS WEEK

THU, JUN 25 - SUN, JUN 27



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CALGARY, VARIOUS VENUES

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FRI, JUN 26 - SUN, JUL 5



EDMONTON JAZZ FESTIVAL

VARIOUS VENUES

From Branford Marsalis to Tommy Banks, there are plenty of performances lined up for the 2009 Jazz festival. You can find the complete lineup and schedule online at edmontonjazz.com.

FRI, JUN 26 - WED, JUL 1

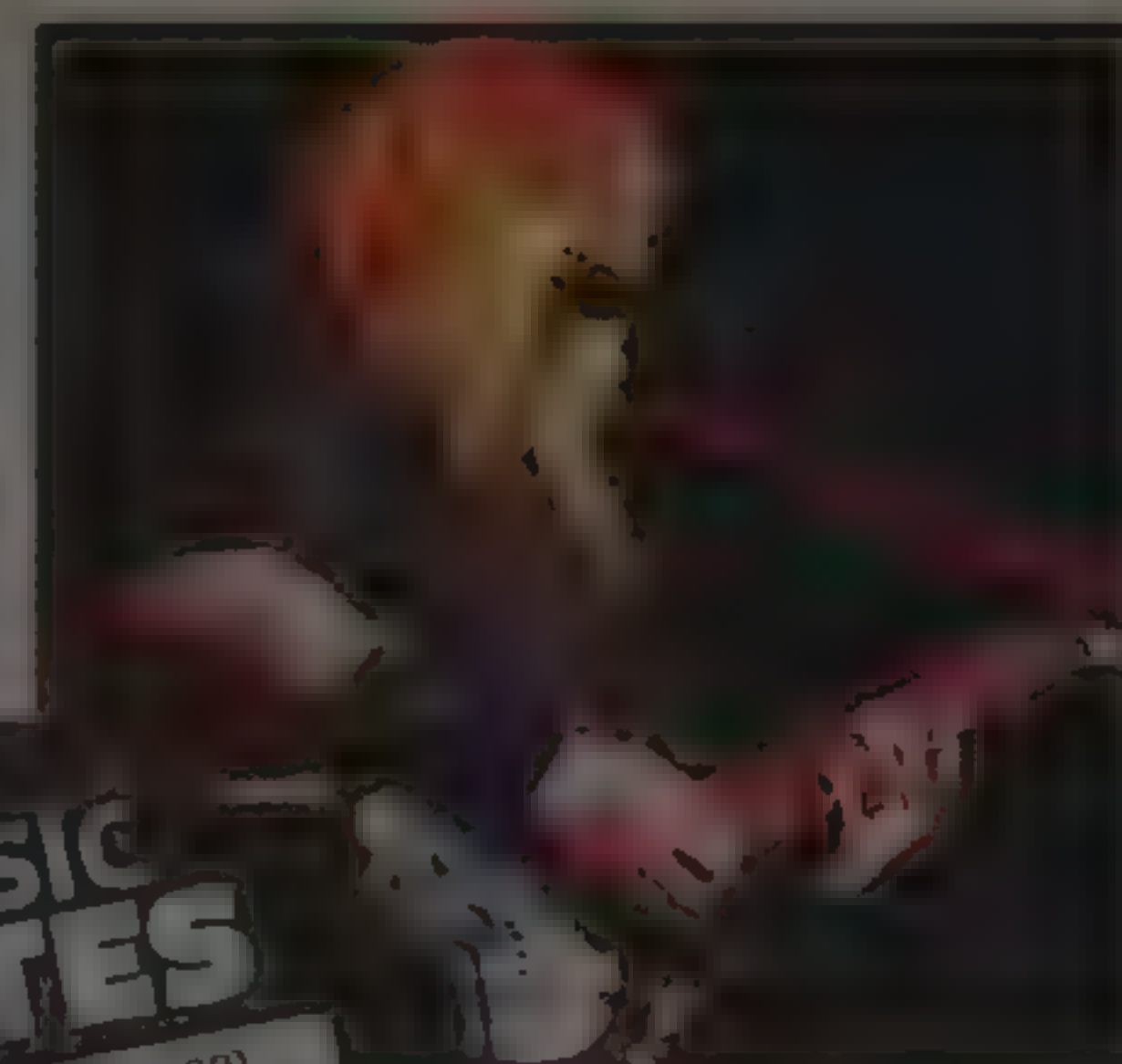
THE WORKS ARTS DESIGN FESTIVAL

WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE, FREE
 ALL AGES

The Works isn't over yet, so head on down and see who's up there on the street stage. Check out the complete lineup and schedule online at theworks.ab.ca.

MUSIC NOTES

eden.vueweekly.com



FRI, JUN 26 (6 pm)

MEGADETH

WITH SLAYER, MACHINE HEAD.

SINCE SILENCE

REXALL PLACE, \$59.50 - \$79.50
 ALL AGES

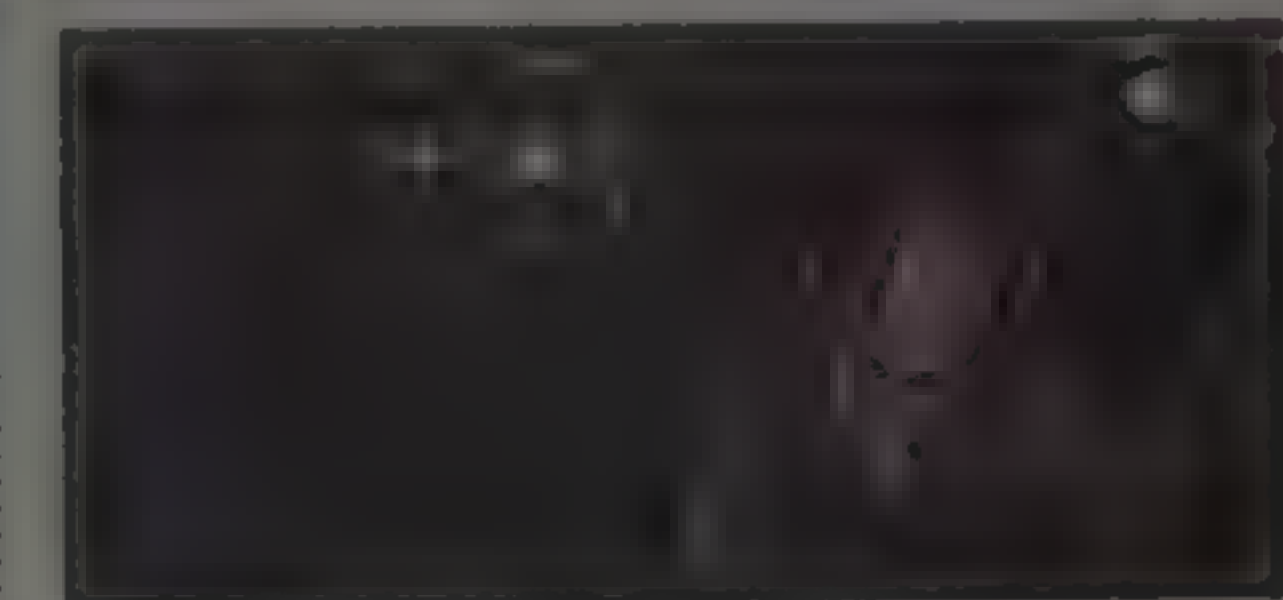
Megadeth's Dave Mustaine spoke to Vue when the band came through Edmonton in May 2008. This is what he had to say about wussy bands and the dangers of the concert stage: "I look at a lot of other bands that have become really popular and they just absolutely self-destruct. I dig the band Oasis—some of their songs are really cool to listen to when you're driving or when you're partying, not the really mellow, sappy crap, but I mean the cool, kinda buzzy, fast alternative riffs—and then you hear that these guys went home because someone threw a shoe at them up here in Canada somewhere. Man, I've been hit with more shoes than I know what to do with—that's just part of the job."

FRI, JUN 26 (8 pm)

PADMA TALWALKAR

STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY
 THEATRE, \$10 - \$20
 ALL AGES

The Edmonton Raga-Mala Music Society is presenting this performance by Indian singer Padma Talwalkar. Audio of Talwalkar can be heard at youtube.com/watch?v=b9z9Ms2LhqA.



FRI, JUN 26 (10 pm)

NO HORSES

WITH THE LOUD HAILERS, THE SECRETARIES
 NEW CITY

No Horses is on the tail end of the band's 14 Gig Hard Drive summer tour, having covered distance from its Vancouver base south to Los Angeles and east through the US before heading back north to wrap things up in Edmonton and Calgary. The band is working its self-titled debut from last year, a slab of Crazy Horse-esque ragged glory. Yeah, I know that it's too easy to describe anything with frayed edges as Crazy Horse-esque, but these guys deserve it, having laid the album down live-off-the-floor over a week. The result is rambling and it occasionally sounds like it's all going to fall apart, but in a good way—a lot like the best stuff that Neil Young's done with Crazy Horse.

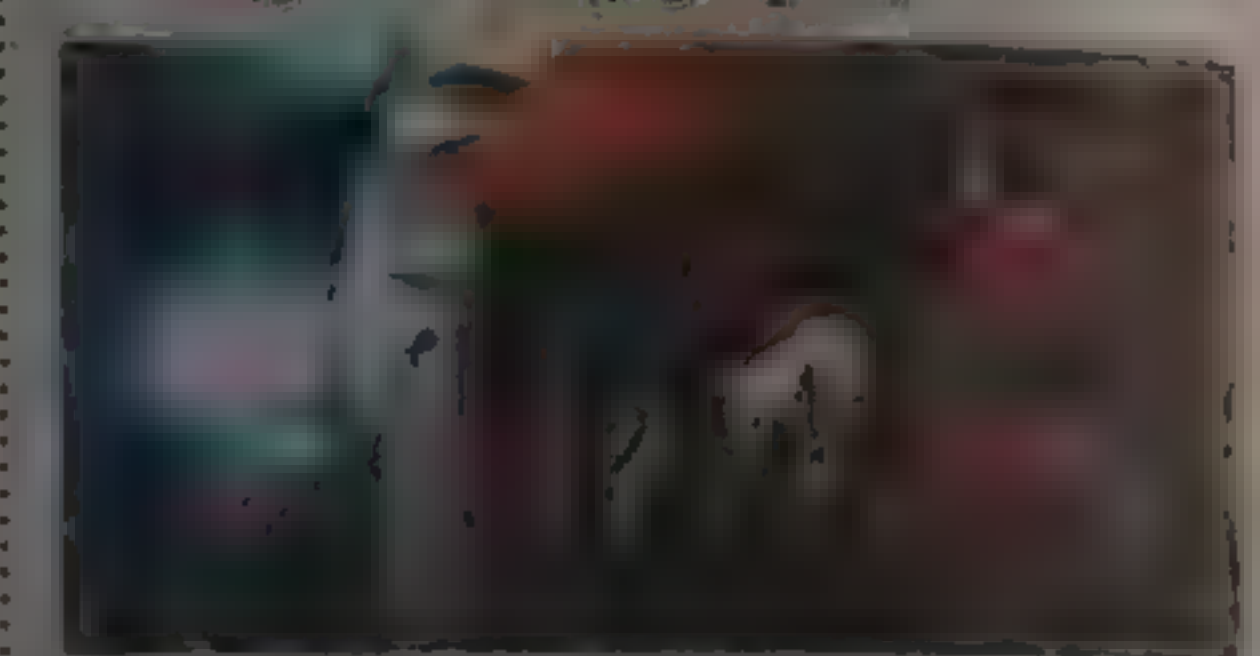
SAT, JUN 27 (4:30 pm)

THE BRITISH COLUMBIANS

WITH MICHAEL JAMES
 FILTHY MCNASTY'S, FREE

This band from Van plays some messy bluesy rock 'n' roll—not that crazy blues-rock stuff that passes for music in corner pubs and pick-up trucks. No, these guys remembered the roll, and this stuff has got grit, grime and hurt all over it—just like it should.

SUN, JUN 28 (7:30 pm)



THE MOHAWK LODGE

WITH EAMON MCGRATH & THE WILD DOGS
 TOBERMAN, PRECIOUS FATHERS
 HYDEAWAY
 ALL AGES

Ryder Havdale has been running his White Whale Records for five years now, and in that time he's put out record from the likes of Poorfolk, Edmonton's Eamon McGrath and Havdale's own band, the Mohawk Lodge. When the Poorfolk/Mohawk Lodge tour came through Edmonton last year Havdale stopped by the Vue Weekly studio to perform live, backed up by his tourmates. Watch the footage at vueweekly.com, see the live show at the Hydeaway.

MON, JUN 29 (7 pm)

HOLLYWOOD UNDEAD

WITH GUESTS
 STARLITE ROOM \$26.50
 ALL AGES

Hollywood Undead, starring the zombies from *Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Day of the Dead*, *Land of the Dead* and *Diary of the Dead*. Attend at your own risk.

THU, JUL 2 (10 pm)

DIAMONDS

NEW CITY

Cut from the same dirty and torn cloth as the gutter punks and rock 'n' roll bands of the '70s and '80s, Diamonds debut EP is fast and furious and a hell of a lot of fun. It's a catchy throwback to a time gone by and the band never takes itself too seriously but neither does Diamonds play it for laughs, instead heading straight for the thrills.

THU, JUL 2 (8 pm)

TIFF HALL

WITH NEIL McDONALD
 HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB, \$10

According to Tiff Hall's MySpace, her influences include bad dates, her friend's bad dates, drunken nights on Whyte Ave with her good buddies, bad decisions and nice boyfriends. Sounds just right for the soulful tunes that make up her debut *The New Fabulous*. **V**

Call them the wanderers

Gypsophilia melds influences from all over the map



OF STRANGERS >> Gypsophilia's members all met for the first time on stage

ANGUS

ings have been all backwards or Halifax's gypsy-jazz ensemble Gypsophilia right from the start. So ad's guitarist Ross Burns, who recounts band's very first gig together.

"We all met each other for the first time on stage at the Atlantic Jazz Festival in 2004. A couple of guys in the band asked to get a band together to play Django Reinhardt's music for a slot at the festival ... It was for a single gig; it wasn't intended to be a band that plays together the time. We played the show and it was a total sell-out, and here we were, still trying to figure out what it was about."

This odd pattern of backpedaling toward success seems to suit the seven-piece ensemble, however. Since that first show, the group has written and recorded original material and been nominated for numerous awards. The band's new release, *Sa-ba-da-OW!*, is a mash-and-grab blend of jazz, funk, reggae and reggae.

When I ask Burns about the success of the band's dazzling live show, he's obviously thrilled about the excitement Gypsophilia has been able to attract, especially across purist lines that can exist between jazz and indie rock. After all, when you're drawing influences from Duke Ellington to Beirut, there can be a lot of paths to follow. Burns is diplomatic.

It's certainly the case that we're able to let those influences follow whatever paths we're into, and not be too meticulous about matching up to 'what we should be doing.' It plays well in making the music sound genuine. But when people come to our show because they want to see what it's all about, they aren't

necessarily coming at it from the perspective of a jazz purist. Which is exciting because, according to a purist's perspective, we don't hit a lot of those rules. We typically don't do that, we just want to make music that feels good, and sounds good to us.

"It helps when we're playing in a rock club," he adds, "because people aren't expecting a jazz band, so they're not wondering, 'What kind of jazz band is this,' but rather, 'What the hell are these people doing?' That type of surprise can really work to our advantage."

As we talk about the challenges of being backed into a genre corner like "gypsy-jazz," Burns is quick to extol the virtues of each. Whereas gypsy music brings the structure of traditional music, jazz allows for freedom and improvisation.

"I think people definitely appreciate that our music has this nostalgic feeling from the 1930s, and yet we're not the typical face of jazz music. ... Improvising is a big part of what we do, but it's also the energy that each member brings every night. Depending on what feels exciting and who's playing really well, there ends up being enough space for who's playing really energetically, or getting ideas out. It's a nice balance. We take those rules and use as much of our other faculties to make it exciting as we go, both for ourselves and for whoever's listening."

MON, JUN 29 (7:30 PM)
GYPSOPHILIA
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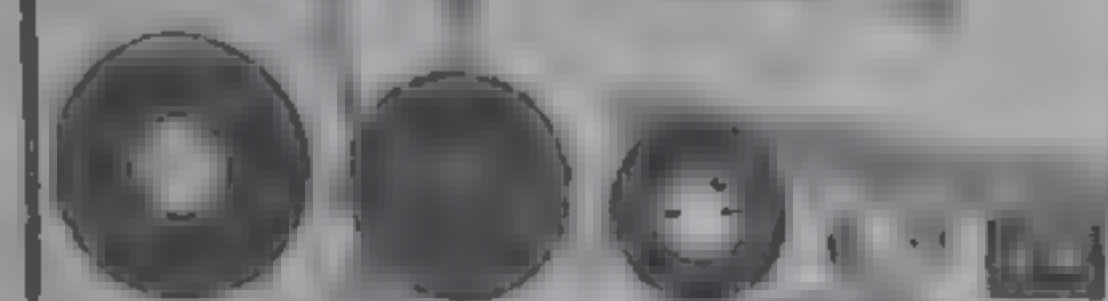
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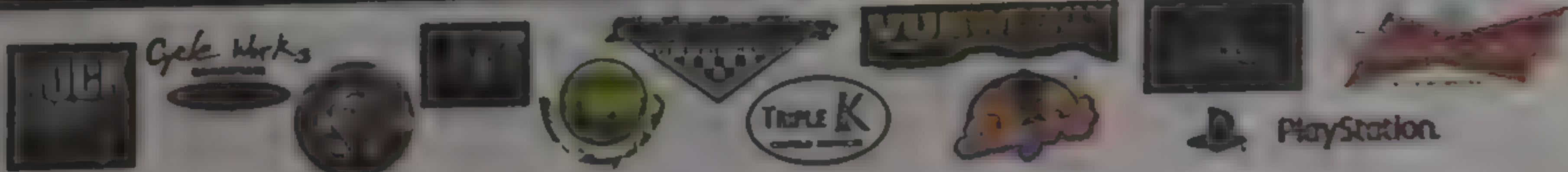
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PREVIEW // THE BEER DRINKING FIGHTING MACHINE

KA-POW! WHAM! BANG!

Calgary band takes the gloves off and throws 'em down

FAWNDA MITHRUSH
// FAWNDA@VUEWEEKLY.COM

Back in 2003, when Mark Russell and his bandmates showed up at a disappointing Calgary gig, he was inspired to start a revolution. It involved mostly beer and loud music, but still, a movement was underway.

"We were at this show one night six years ago, one we paid 10 bucks to see," Russell explains. "We wanted to mosh and listen to some hard shit and we ended up walking into this acoustic jam. That was pretty much the reason we started the Beer Drinking Fighting Machine and the Calgary Beer Core, to get underground music out there and back up and running."

His hardcore band, the Beer Drinking Fighting Machine (BDFM), has led the Beer Core movement in Calgary ever since, and is now boasting some cross-country membership.

"Calgary Beer Core started as a small group of friends to help bands get out of the basement and get into a crowd, start playing bar shows, get 'em out of the all-ages scene once they turned 18," Russell explains. "At first we were looking for fast hard bands, ones that the popular clubs wouldn't put on—we would take them and put them in front of a crowd of 500 people. Now we've embraced Alberta music and Canadian music in general. Everybody and anybody who wants to play, they



HERE TO DRINK SOME BEER AND KICK SOME ASS >> Looks like they're almost out of beer // Supplied

can be a part of the Beer Core."

As for the stigma that naming something after beer brings, Russell says that it's mostly a reference to the way it all started: with he and his drummer getting into a beer-soaked brawl one night. After handing some thugs their asses, Russell and Scott came up with the BDFM moniker.

"It's not like we are the BDFM," he says. "It's the entity of the music, we all come together as a well-oiled machine, the six of us, and that's what gives us the beer-drinking-fighting edge."

What's important, he notes, is that BDFM and the Core offer fledgling bands

some leadership. "It's not a gang, it's a way of life," he says. "We're a promotion company essentially, trying to help out the little guy. I think as a whole Canada should be coming together as a music scene. I'm just trying to help everybody to get bigger, get more fans, sell merch, communicate with other people. That's what it's all about: networking. Can't play ball without a field, right?"

FRI, JUN 26 (9 PM)

THE BEER DRINKING FIGHTING MACHINE
WITH SNFU, LAST PLAGUE
NEW CITY, \$12 - \$15

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Birtles vs. Nardwuar

Vue Weekly talks to the Human Serviette



KA-BOOM! >> One of these guys has a bomb in his pants // William R. Jans

BRYAN BIRTLES
// BRYAN@VUEWEEKLY.COM

Vancouver's Nardwuar the Human Serviette is different from most music journalists. Not unlike Lester Bangs, when Nardwuar does an interview, the story is as much about him as it is about whoever is on the other end of his microphone. The fact that he refers to his interviews as battles, naming them things like Nardwuar vs. Sonic Youth or Nardwuar vs. Henry Rollins, bears this out, but he's not simply a plaid-bedecked scene stealer; Nardwuar also fronts the well-loved pop-punk band the Evaporators. Having just released a split seven-inch with Andrew W.K.—whose side of the split single features cover versions of songs by Canadian punks the Subhumans and the Leather Uppers—Nardwuar was kind enough to talk about how the split originated, as well as other aspects of the record, *A Wild Pear*.

Vue Weekly: Tell me about how you first met Andrew W.K.

Nardwuar: The first time I met him was when I interviewed him in 2002 or 2003 in Vancouver, but he had heard of me—a girl had ordered an Evaporators single, "The Welcome to my Castle single, I think it was in 1992. Her name was Sue and I think she went on to work for Caroline Records and she ordered a whole bunch of other records I had put out and became familiar with my stuff, then I started trading stuff to her—like she would send a videotape to me and I would fill it up with interviews and then mail it back to her—and she passed that videotape on to Andrew W.K. And then he came to Vancouver and I tried to do an interview with him but I was not allowed to because he was on Universal Records and Universal Records at the time had remembered that I had interviewed Beck in 1994 and Beck told me to fuck off—Yes, me to fuck off—so I got tired from interviewing anybody on

Universal Records for many, many years from then on.

However, the next time he came to Vancouver I fought and I eventually did get an interview through Universal, so that is how I hooked up with him and he said to me I first heard of you from a VHS tape from a woman named Sue from Caroline Records.

VW: And how is it that your band the Evaporators came to put out a split seven-inch with him?

NW: I did that interview with Andrew W.K. and he had mentioned in the interview that he liked the Leather Uppers and I always sort of remembered that in the back of my mind, and then last year I went out during the Music Waste Festival which is a great music festival here in Vancouver and I saw a bunch of great bands and got inspired and thought, "Man! We should do a split single!" and I thought, "I wonder if Andrew W.K. would want to do something?"

He had recently responded to an email I had sent out, my Nardwuar newsletter, and he responded, "Thanks for the newsletter, I enjoyed it," so when I was thinking about a seven-inch I thought, "Well, here's a guy that loves Canadian rock"—because I wanted to have a Canadian flavour to it—"and here's a guy who responds to my emails and here's somebody that I really enjoy the music that they do, why don't I ask Andrew W.K.," and he emailed me back right away and said, "Yeah, sure!"

VW: The title as well as the art are a take-off of a split-LP put out by the Guess Who and the Staccatos in 1968 called *A Wild Pear*. What attracted you to that album?

NW: I've always been obsessed with pre-American Woman Guess Who, in fact I interviewed the original lead singer of the Guess Who, Chad Allan and he played on the first three albums—*Shakin' All Over*, *Hey Ho (What You Do To Me)*, and *It's Time*, and the fourth album was the split with

the Staccatos, and after that was all the American Woman-type stuff. The first three or four albums were total garage punk and I've been obsessed with that, I just love it. And of course I'm obsessed by the Staccatos because they turned into the Five Man Electrical Band. Plus it's a split record and I was thinking of famous Canadian split records, cause I was gonna do one.

VW: There's a song on here called "The Bombs in my Pants!" Inspired by a true story or—?

NW: [It was] inspired by a band that I got to know through the Smugglers—the Smugglers were on tour years ago and they met a band called Olivelawn and Olivelawn turned into the band Fluf, and O from the band told me a story about being on tour and how if you gotta go to the washroom, you gotta go to the washroom but some washrooms aren't too good. But he said it doesn't matter you can always do the bomb. So I said, "What's the bomb?"

He's like, you take off your underwear, you take off your pants and you hang them on the hook in the toilet, and then you stand on the toilet and then you drop your bomb and then just as the bomb is about to hit the water in the toilet bowl so it doesn't splash on your leg, with your right leg you flush the toilet at the exact same moment so everything goes down and there's no splashing. So I always had that word bomb in my mind and that's kind of what the song is about. **V**

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PREVIEW // LES CLAYPOOL

Monkey masks and fungi

The oddball is just the norm in Les Claypool's world



THE GUY NEXT DOOR >> Well, if the guy next door is Les Claypool // File

CAROLYN WOODY
// CAROLYN@VUEWEEKLY.COM

It would be easy to say that there is nothing normal about Les Claypool. You could look at his time with Primus, pig costumes, "Winona's Big Brown Beaver" and all. Or you could look at his spoof film (and band) on the jam band scene, *Electric Apricot*. Or you could look at his wine label Purple Pachyderm, with its "magnificent nose." You could look at much of his career and come to that conclusion. He's even called himself an "oddball" in interviews. But it's not a branding that he's even sure that he lives up to.

"It's been occasionally thrust upon me. I think it's all subjective. Compared to the stuff that I grew up listening to or was influenced by, I'm pretty tame. I'm just one of those guys who was always—even as a kid—looking for something different in all aspects of things. Be it film or literature or fashion or music. I have friends who tell me all the time that they are asked, 'What's he like? What's Claypool like? Is he this weird bastard?' And I think their response is surprisingly tame," Claypool laughs. "I'm in the bubble. I don't know what the hell it looks like on the outside."

The reality is Claypool has always just tried to keep things interesting. Donning weird costumes on stage is far more fun than just coming out in T-shirts and jeans.

"Plus, I love people's faces when you come out with a monkey mask on and you have the whamola and you're beating on this thing with a stick," he says. "I don't tire of the reaction."

Even though undertaking a novel, a film or a new band generally turns into a heap of work, the quest for the engaging keeps everyone guessing and is not without its perks—like the opportunity to work with some of music's other weirdos.

"A lot of it, too, is just what falls in my lap. If Eugene Hutz is over at my house, we drink a bunch of booze and we end up in the studio, and that's exciting to me. Or if I get a phone call from Adrian

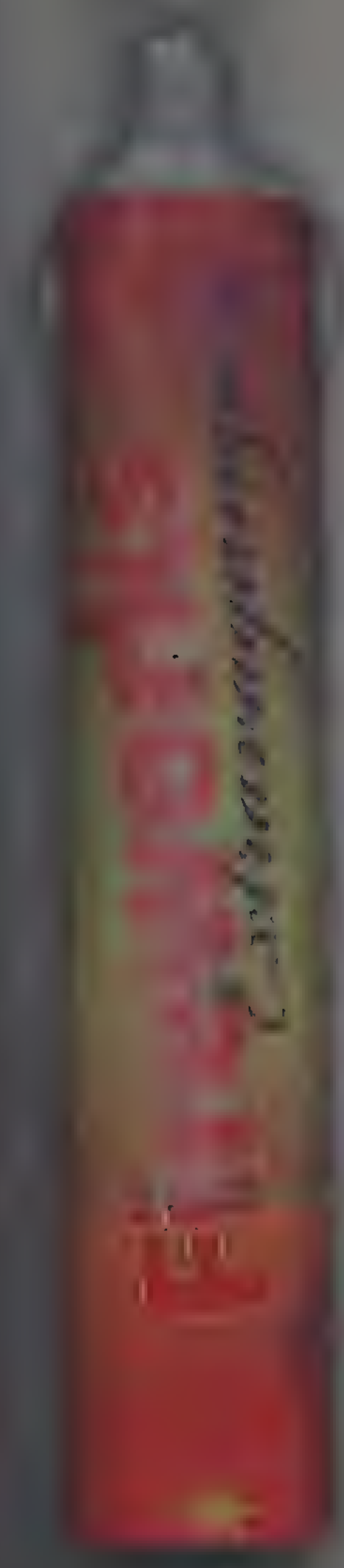
Belew or Stuart Copeland or Tom Waits or one of these guys, that's generally the direction I'm going to go more often than, say, going and doing a Primus record," he says. "Something like Primus is a comfortable pair of shoes. It's easy, but it's not as exciting for me. Going and making a film was the most difficult thing that I have ever done. It was insanely stressful and painful—physically and mentally—yet I'm looking to do another one. So I think it's the whole variety-is-the-spice-of-life thing."

These days, Claypool is on tour in support of his latest record, *Of Fungi and Foe*. Commissioned to write music for Nintendo Wii's *Mushroom Men: The Spore Wars* and for the horror film *Pig Hunt*, he was so inspired by the imagery of each project that he had the foundation for the album. Although some of the tracks come off a little more minimalist and others a little darker than fans may be used to, the record still revels in the cartoonish, off-kilter sound Claypool has made famous.

But he also has his fingers in a few other pies. The aforementioned second feature film he's working on is based on his novel *South of the Pumphouse* (which he, incidentally, wrote as a screenplay first), and he's also working on another book. It's not another novel, though, rather a collection of stories. Novel writing is something that he found isolating, alienating and a lot of work—a surprising description from someone so prolific.

It could be a clue, though, into the mind of this particular weirdo. When you take in the cabaret environment of his stage show or consider that he formed a real band to lend authenticity to *Electric Apricot*, you begin to see what makes Claypool different. He simply doesn't do anything half-assed. ▽

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New Sounds

Lee Harvey Osmond

A Quiet Evil

(Latent)

★★★★☆



EDEN MUNRO

// EDEN@VUEWEEKLY.COM

A gently rolling rhythm fades up, a percussive blues harp underscoring the beat as a lonely pedal steel cries off to the right of a whispered, lamenting vocal: "Baby's world is falling down / Falling down on holy ground." The groove is hypnotic as "The Love of One" carries onward, turning over and over on itself as it goes, until it finally leads into the next song, another rhythmic piece of work, but this time more drifting than rolling. "Cuckoo's Nest" is the name, its verses alternately broken and punctuated by chiming percussion, singing bass and punchy reeds.

It's relaxed even when it's not—or perhaps it's the other way around. However it plays out, it's a counterpoint that delivers Lee Harvey Osmond's A Quiet Evil from the depths of modern folk, which too often is little more than an attempt at recreating the spirit of past works, resulting in a sort of nostalgia that pales next to the originals.

On A Quiet Evil, though, Lee Harvey Osmond—a collaborative effort between Junkhouse/Blackie & the Rodeo Kings singer Tom Wilson, Cowboy Junkies' guitarist/songwriter Michael Timmons and more than a dozen other musicians—finds a balance between

inspiration and something new. In this case, there's a darkness in the band's efforts, a spooky guitar line drawn out in the blues vamp "Blade of Grass" just before Wilson asks, "Do you want to stay married? / Do you want the truth?" the song ultimately becoming a twisted hulk of dark folk lyrics and electronic manipulations.

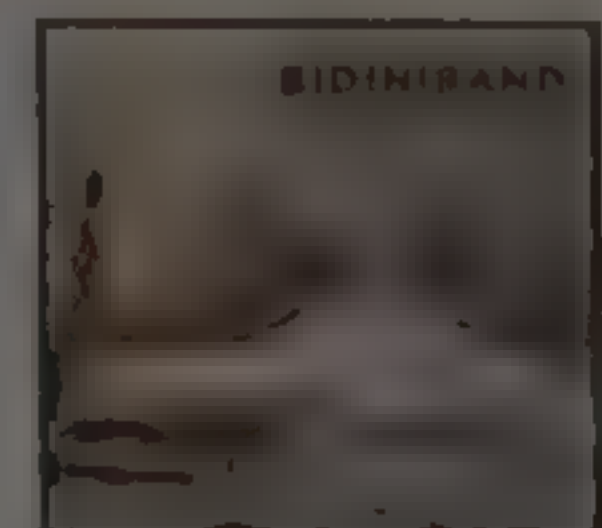
Most of the songs here are originals with Wilson the primary writer throughout, though Timmons contributes one song in the sparse and ghostly "Angels in the Wilderness," a track that would be at home in the Cowboy Junkies' canon were it not for Wilson's heartwrenching vocal taking the place of the Junkies' voice, Margo Timmins, making the song a little darker and frayed than it likely would be in the Junkies' hands. There are three covers as well, filling the album out nicely, especially so because all the songs work together as a whole, the covers settling in comfortably alongside the originals, sounding very much like the work of a single entity, a group that understands its sound, whether it's the very Junkies-esque, slow-and-steady approach of "I'm Going to Stay That Way" or the album-closing freak-out on Lou Reed's "I Can't Stand It."

A Quiet Evil does have moments when it seemingly threatens to give in to the pull of an all-too-typical folk-shuffle—the easygoing beginning of the band's take on Canadian folkie David Wiffen's "Lucifer's Blues" is one of them—but they tend to pass quickly: once Wilson hits the song's chorus he nails the mark, exuding the wear and tear of travel in his voice: "It seems like lately baby / I don't have much urge to roam / Halfway through my last trip west I was making plans to get back home."

Lee Harvey Osmond strikes an admirable chord with its debut, pulling equally from folk traditions and the strengths of the band's individual members as songwriters, players and, in the case of Timmins, Wilson and bassist Josh Finlayson, producers. The result is a welcome entry into the Canadian folk scene V

The Land Is Wild
(Phenomone)

★★★★☆



For recovering Rheoholics, there's no resisting Dave Bidini's first solo record—following the Rheostatics' swan song two years ago. I wish I had, though. The band was fronted by three distinct personalities (Bidini being one of them) whose only commonality may have been their collective musical iconoclasm, but without that collaborative balance Bidini's raw, unpolished, DIY attitude—which was the heart and soul of his former band—comes to the fore like a jagged bone through soft flesh. While "Memorial Day" reveals all of Bidini's strengths as a songwriter and arranger, the blandness and garage-band hoserism of songs like "We Like to Rock" and "Song Ain't Any Good" leave much to be desired.

MIKE ANGUS

// MIKEANGUS@VUEWEEKLY.COM

The Black Eyed Peas

The E.N.D.

(Interscope)

★★★★☆



The tones have shifted towards the electro, but while there's nothing that quite compares to the ridiculousness of 2005's "My Humps," there's a sense that the group hasn't left that mindset far behind, crafting a disc largely designed for the clubs. Anthems are front and centre here, but while those are fine once darkness has fallen, the most interesting parts are the ones where the group lay back instead of going over the top—moments like the David Guetta-produced second single "I Gotta Feeling," which glides along in a place that celebrates what's to come, with the focus on the hope that exists in the dusk rather than the overblown glory of the night itself. It's a more captivating place, one where the party hasn't started yet, leaving room for anticipation instead of chest-beating shouts. There are a few tracks like that here, but it would be nice if the group would spend a little more time exploring those routes.

EDEN MUNRO

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Dream Theater

Black Clouds & Silver Linings

(Roadrunner)

★★★★☆



Solos aplenty can be found here along with long meandering progressions through many, many tempo changes and a wide range of lyrical landscapes. It's ridiculous to the extreme, unless you happen to be a fan of progressive metal, in which case the 19-minute epic "The Count of Tuscany" is awesome.

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Patterson Hood
Murdering Oscar (and other love
songs)

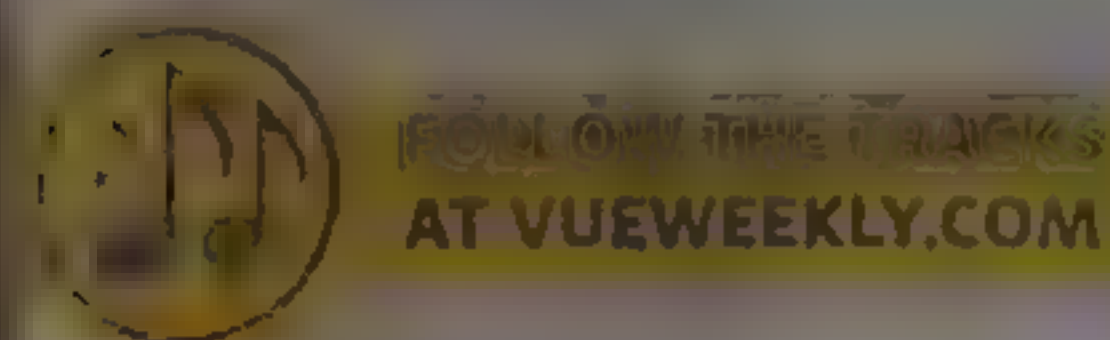
★★★★☆



Patterson Hood's day job is as one of the songwriters in the Drive-By Truckers, where he shares the heavy loads. On his second solo al-

though, Hood bears the burden on his own, and it's a stunning effort as he works his way through a series of feelings that are often so conflicted that it's impossible to simply sit back and listen without actively trying to decipher the meanings behind the words. (The title track is a perfect example of this—it simply feels strange and a little wrong to listen to the opening lines without trying to make sense of them: "I killed Oscar, shot him in the head / Put the gun in his mouth, watched his brains fly out.") As heavy as the words (and the music) can be, though, it's not all dark clouds and thunderstorms here; Hood can be downright sentimental when the mood strikes. In the end, it's his ability to walk the line, weighting the record towards one side or the other at various times, that gives *Murdering Oscar* the feel of a life worn in, a little faded with a hole or two torn in it, but one that is well-worth spending some time visiting.

EDEN MUNRO
EDEN@VUEWEEKLY.COM



Spinnerette
Spinnerette
(Anthem)
★★★★☆



Brody Dalle left the punk guitars behind when her former band the Distillers came to an end, but she's kept the attitude for Spinnerette.

It's more groove-oriented—almost danceable, really—but still dark and angry as ever. The difference is that this time Dalle and her bandmates are working with a few new tricks, subtly being one of them, and it suits her well at times. Unfortunately, the album too often gets bogged down in repetitive swirls that ultimately dilute the impact of the songs.

EDEN MUNRO
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Larry Jon Wilson
Larry Jon Wilson
(Drag City)
★★★★☆



Not unlike Johnny Cash's *American Recordings*, Larry Jon Wilson strips his songs right down here, age giving his voice an added weight that would crush any of today's country stars. He's heartbreaking and there's a real ease about him as he sings these songs.

EDEN MUNRO
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ALBUM REVIEWS

Beck, One Foot in the Grave
(K) Originally released: 1994
Before the quirky loserdom of Beck Hansen's 1994 major-label debut, *Mellow Gold*, the songwriter had already released three independent records in the noisy folk/rock mix of *Golden Feelings*, *A Western Harvest Field* by *Moonlight* and *Stereopathic Soulmanure*.

Those initial indie releases clearly come from the same sonic landscape as the albums Beck would release on the majors—off-the-wall cut-and-paste sounds dominating the tone, twisting even the simplest folk arrangement into something not-quite-earthbound, not-quite-otherworldly.

The same can't be said of *One Foot in the Grave*, another independent album—this time released on K Records—that arrived just two months after *Mellow Gold*. This one is very much rooted in the folk tradition that is often obscured beneath an array of other influences, ranging from rock to hip hop and beyond, that surface often in Beck's music in both cohesive and disjointed forms.

But here on *One Foot in the Grave*, the songwriter sounds very much at home in the folk realm, acoustic guitars forming the backbone of the work, with Beck dragging the vocals through an emotional wringer that exposes every open wound—"You're just the girl of my dreams / But it seems my dreams never come true," or "She'll do anything to make you feel like an asshole."

Lyrical, there are certainly glimpses of what's to come, Beck's words often very much rooted in the modern world around him: "A mouthful of rotting cavities / Drinking Coca-Cola in the street / Never did I think it would come to this," he sings on "Outcome."



GRAVE, BECK'S FIRST MAJOR LABEL RELEASE

Musically, too, Beck's future is hinted at in places, if only in a sketched-out way: "Outcome" is delivered with a near-spoken-word vocal over top of a driving beat that, were it to be punched up with some electric guitars and bright percussion, would not seem out of place on one of his later works.

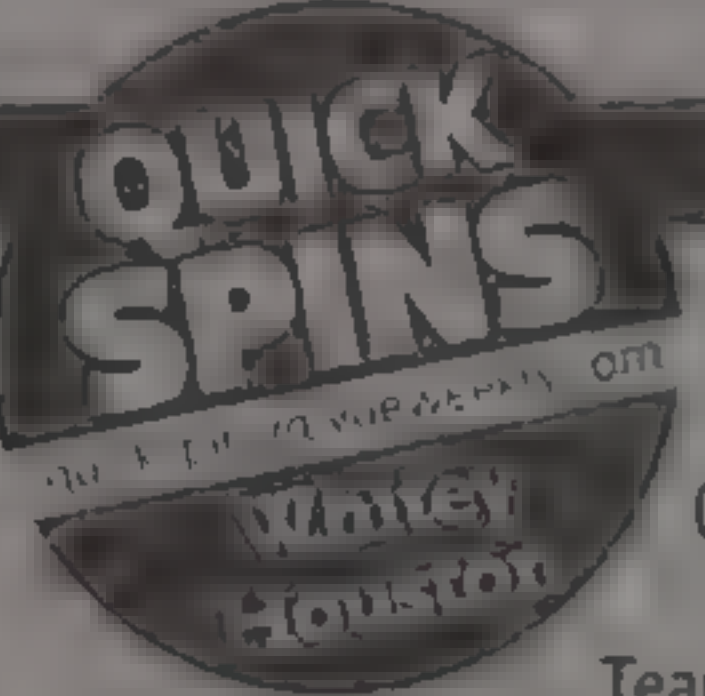
As it is, though, *One Foot in the Grave* sits most comfortably alongside 2002's *Sea Change*, which found Beck indulging in a restrained, quieter side, letting sadness rise to the fore rather than burying discomfort and unhappiness beneath a myriad of layers of instruments and samples,

built up on propulsive beats.

But while there are similarities in the two records, there is still a considerable distance between them; *Sea Change* is deep with layers of sounds, atmospheric clouds swirling up around Beck's voice, while *One Foot in the Grave* is simply raw, opening up with the slightly-out-of-tune guitar on the spiritual "He's a Mighty Good Leader"—Beck's interpretation of Skip James's "Jesus is a Mighty Good Leader"—and carries on into the expanded sound of "Sleeping Bag," where a basic drum kit keeps the time and an electric guitar offers up some slinky, quiet slides. With few exceptions—the apocalyptic blues of "Ziplock Bag" and the rolling "Atmospheric Conditions"—*One Foot in the Grave* is folk-inspired, Beck's songs captured in a lo-fi form that recalls the earliest field recordings made by the likes of John Lomax. In some ways the record's an anomaly in his catalogue, but at the same time it's a revealing look at his soul.

One Foot in the Grave was recently re-released by Beck on his own Iliad Records. The new version contains the original 16 tracks plus an additional 16 songs, 12 of which were previously unreleased.

HAIKU



Tim Easton
Porcupine
(New West)

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Cass McCombs
Catacombs
(Domino)

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(FSTP)

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A gang prison rape

Eugene McGuiness
Eugene McGuiness
(Domino)

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Since October
This Is My Heart
(Tooth & Nail)

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Of bad metal, dreadlocks, plus
Jesus and his dad

The Homemade Jamz Blues Band
I Got Blues For You
(Northern Blues)

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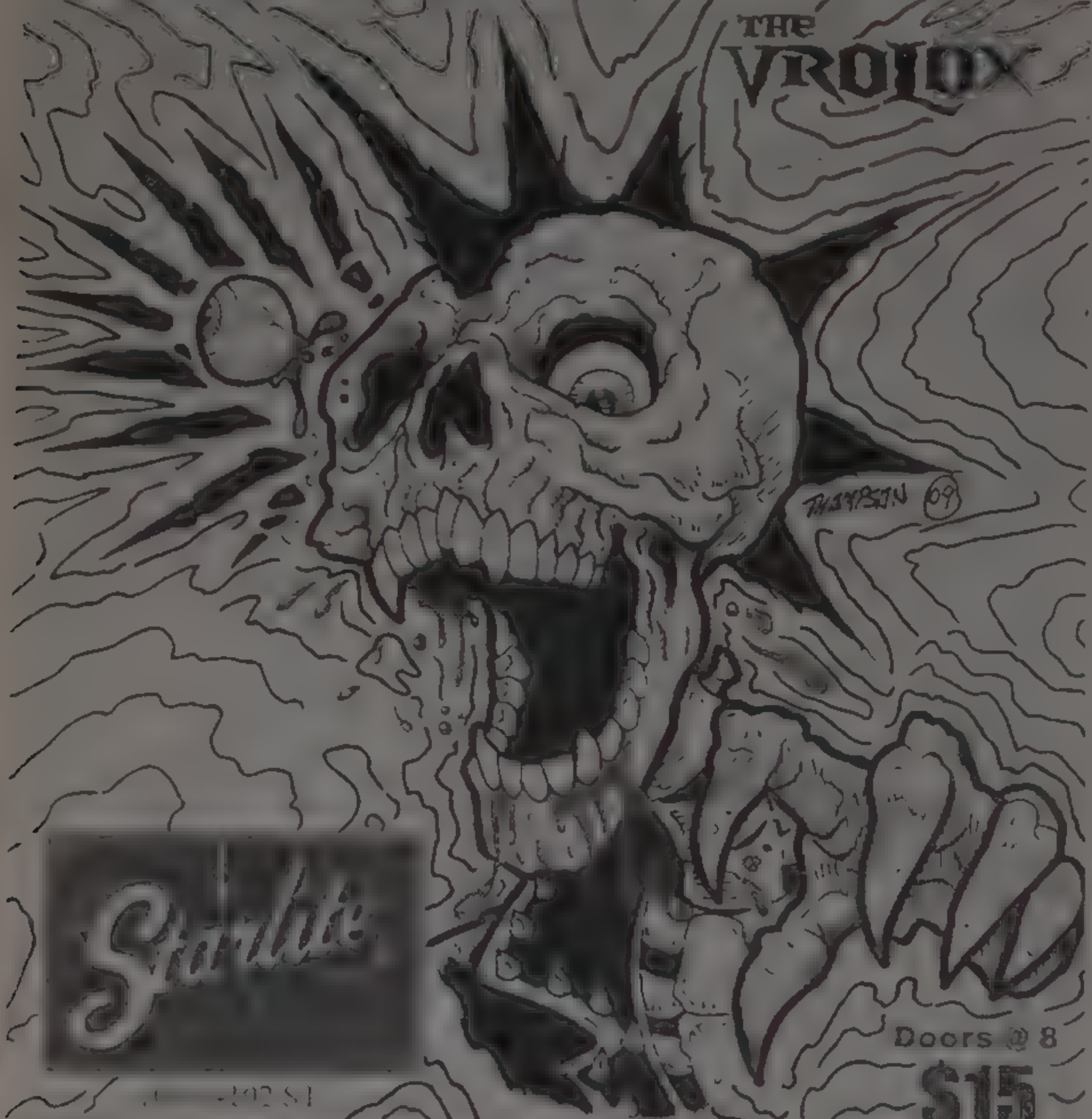
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A Naked Promise

Singer refused to quit in face of cancer

JAMES STEWART
// JSTEWART@VUEWEEKLY.COM

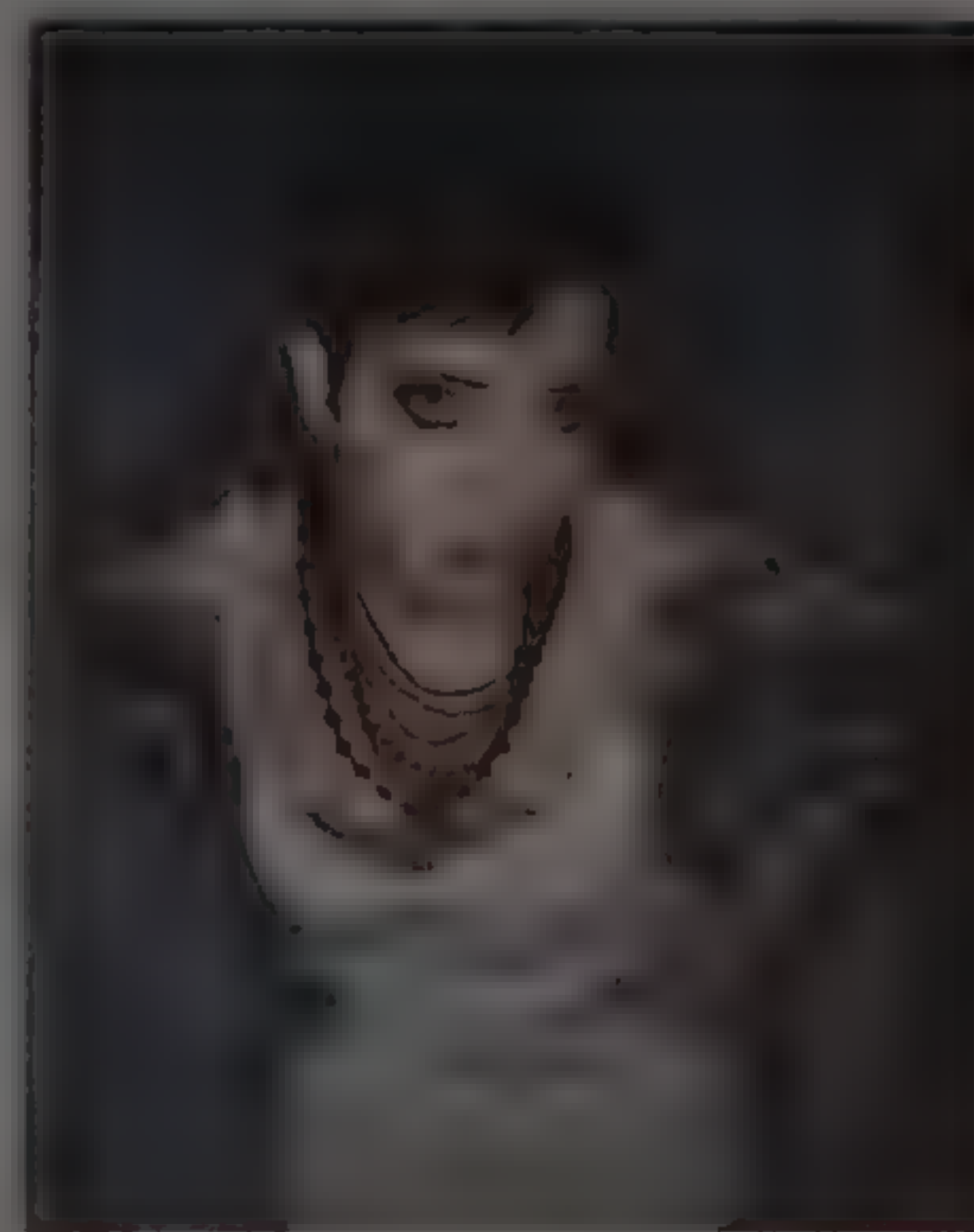
It's a hoarse-sounding Bif Naked that manages to croak out a hello on the other end of the line.

"Ugh, I sound this way because those sons of bitches wrote such a damn heavy record. But it sure is awesome to play these songs live."

You'd be hard pressed to find anyone happier at the prospect of many months' worth of sore throats ahead of them. In early 2008, word came down that Naked had been diagnosed with breast cancer, and the uber-healthy Naked (a strict straight-edge and vegan) found herself facing the reality of a lengthy recovery process.

"When you go through the treatment, you really have no idea what to anticipate—it's so different for everyone," she says. "So I'm sitting there with a catheter in my jugular, and totally bald from the chemo for about 10 months. I had very definite physical limitations, and I was only really able to work on my vocals for about an hour a day, which was vastly different from previous records."

What? It may come as a surprise, but Naked was still adamant that work would continue on her fifth and latest



TOUGH AS NAILS >> Bif Naked returns on record and stage after beating cancer // Supplied

album, *The Promise*, throughout her aggressive chemotherapy treatments.

"What can I say? I'm an every-four-years kind of girl," she laughs. "Jason [Darr, producer/guitarist] was a real godsend. It's the first time we've been able to make a record together, though I've known him forever. He's got, like, dog-hearing, and collaborating with someone so meticulous and driven was amazing. His work ethic is a lot like mine—and he was the toughest

vocal coach I've ever had. Obviously, because of my treatment I couldn't always get the right performance, but he'd always say, 'Hey, we'll get it tomorrow.' And we did."

Even after the initial diagnosis of her cancer, Naked was able to keep a healthy mental attitude in regards to her condition. Aided perhaps by a previous diagnosis of a heart aneurysm in 2003 ("Most of the time, they only find out you had one when they're performing the autopsy," she jokes), Naked is philosophical about the experiences that have not solely hindered her, but also matured and defined her.

"I never feared death or my mortality," she admits. "I'm a total hippie man. It just really never occurred to me that this illness could be it for me, you know? Whether that's naïveté or denial or whatever you want to call it, I just knew I'd be back on stage, playing music for people again." **V**

SAT, JUN 27 (12 PM)

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HOROSCOPE

ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Reality TV personality Spencer Pratt used to be skeptical about the power of prayer. But his wife Heidi, herself a devout believer, urged him to keep his mind open. Then, as an experiment, Spencer asked God to help him and Heidi get a double date with teen pop star Miley Cyrus and her boyfriend, despite the fact that neither of them even knew Cyrus. Apparently God heard and responded, because not too long after that, the hoped-for double date did indeed come to pass. I'm telling you this, Aries, because I think you're entering a phase when you, like Pratt, will have extra luck in making idiosyncratic wishes come true. If I were you, though, I'd focus on more profound idiosyncratic wishes than the kind Pratt pined for.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 20)

Do you have a subconscious urge to escape the constraints of your customary behaviour? Have you ever wished you could be someone else for a while? If so, this is your lucky week, Taurus. The cosmos is granting you a temporary exemption from acting and feeling like your same old self. From now until July 2, you have permission to walk like, talk like, think like and even make love like a Pisces or Virgo or Gemini—or any sign, for that matter, except Scorpio or Aquarius. You might enjoy checking out my horoscopes for the other signs, and following the advice that sounds most fun.

GEMINI (May 21 – Jun 20)

It's Fete Your Feet Week, Gemini. Your soles definitely need more attention, pampering, and contact with nature. (So does your

soul, and hopefully that will happen as you carry out the more literal assignment.) So abstain from wearing your shoes and socks at every opportunity. Get as much contact as possible between your naked feet and the naked earth. Even walking unshod on floors and pavements could prove helpful.

Foot massages are advisable, as well as pedicures, henna tattoos and foot baths. Try praying with your feet instead of your hands, and see if you can get someone to kiss and adore you down there.

CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

"His heart was growing full of broken wings and artificial flowers," wrote poet Federico Garcia Lorca. "In his mouth, just one small word was left." There were times during the first half of June when I was tempted to borrow those words to describe you, Cancerian. Now, thankfully, you're moving into a much brighter phase. The buds that are about to bloom in your heart are very much alive, not artificial, and your wings, while not fully restored to strength, are healing. Meanwhile, your mouth is even now being replenished with a fresh supply of many vivid words.

LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

What scares you or perturbs you in the coming week could, by August, become what fuels you. What makes you feel unsettled and out of sorts could turn out to be good medicine. But of course you're under no obligation to submit yourself to this experimental sequence, Leo. The fact is, you could probably run away from the discomfort and get immediate relief. Unfortunately, taking that approach would

deprive you of the benefits that will almost certainly come from enduring the discomfort for a while. My preference is that you be brave and far-seeing.

VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

There's a better than even chance that you're about to embark on a Summer of Love. To improve your odds even more, meditate on the following questions. 1) What qualities do you look for in a lover that you would benefit from developing more fully in yourself? 2) What do you think are your two biggest delusions about the way love works? 3) Is there anything you can do to make yourself more lovable? 4) Is there anything you can do to be more loving? 5) Are you willing to deal with the fact that any intimate relationship worth pursuing will inevitably evoke the most negative aspects of both partners—and require both partners to heal their oldest wounds?

LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

You are entering a phase when you'll have more power than usual to influence people. Your charisma will be waxing and the light in your eyes will be growing more intense, making it more likely that your point of view will be heard and appreciated. Your powers of persuasion will be increasing, as well, and you'll have extra understanding about how to motivate people and get them to work together effectively. So let me ask you the most important question: What exactly do you want to accomplish with your enhanced clout?

SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Congratulations, Scorpio. You've reached the end of the Big Squeeze. You've served your time in the bottleneck. And so I invite

you to relax your pinched expression, loosen up your puckered expectations, and let the Season of Experiments begin. According to my projections, you will soon be receiving a host of invitations to wander into the frontier with your raw sense of wonder turned up all the way. Please research each invitation thoroughly before choosing. When you've decided which adventures are most likely to enhance your understanding of the art of liberation, dive in.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

A guy I barely know critiqued me at a party recently. "You haven't suffered enough to feel intense passion," he said. "Your life has been too happy, too easy." I didn't want to get into a debate about whether my life has been too happy and easy, so in my reply I didn't mention my divorce or the time I was shot or the gruelling poverty I endured for 18 years. "So you're saying," I told him, "that suffering is the only way you can acquire passion? I don't agree. Have you ever raised a child? Have you ever been in love with someone who incited you to make radical changes in your life? Have you ever worked on a creation for many years and then submitted it to be judged by thousands of people? I have." I'm letting you know about this, Sagittarius, because I predict you'll soon be offered an experience like those I named—adventures that have the potential to build intense passion without requiring you to suffer.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows," said journalist Sydney J. Harris. That would be an excellent motto for you to live by in the coming weeks, Capricorn. Whether or not you're

enrolled in school, you're in a phase when your capacity for attracting learning experiences is at a peak. To take maximum advantage of the cosmic tendencies, all you have to do is cultivate a hungry curiosity for fresh teachings and life lessons—especially those that shift you away from gazing at your own reflection and toward peering out at the mysteries of the world.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Here's a preview of the accomplishments I expect you to complete in the next four weeks. Number of karmic debts paid off and cancelled: 1. Number of bad habits replaced with good habits: 2. Number of holes blasted in your theory about why you can't do more of what you love to do: 300. Number of "necessities" lost that turn out not to be necessities: 1. Number of psychic wounds successfully medicated: 1. Number of confusing messes that evolve into interesting opportunities: 2. Number of romantic obstructions eliminated: 1 and a half.

PISCES (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

A delicious forbidden fruit will be more available than usual in the coming weeks. You can choose to ignore it, of course. You can pretend it's not even there and instead concentrate on the less forbidden fruits that are tasty enough. Or, on the other hand, you can sidle up closer to the forbidden fruit and engage in some discreet explorations, testing subtly to see whether it's any healthier for your sanity than it used to be. I'm not sure what the best decision is, Pisces, but I do suggest this: don't just rip off all your defenses, forget all your commitments, and start heedlessly taking big bites out of the forbidden fruit. **V**

EVENTS WEEKLY

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OR EMAIL LISTINGS@VUEWEEKLY.COM
DEADLINE: FRIDAY AT 3PM

CLUBS + LECTURES

AFFORDABLE GREEN BUILDING WITH ECOLOGICAL HOMES Whitemud Crossing Library, 106 St, Whitemud Dr • Find out how you can build an ecological LEED home at an affordable price • Mon, June 29, 7pm; RSVP to hagen@ecologicalhomes.ca

AIKIKAI AIKIDO CLUB 10139-87 Ave, Old Strathcona Community League • Japanese Martial Art of Aikido • Every Tue 7:30-9:30pm; Thu 6-8pm

ALBERTA MEDIA ARTS ALLIANCE SOCIETY (AMAAS) www.amaas.ca • Conference, the premiere of emerging Alberta-based films and filmmakers (Prairie Tales), workshops and presentations by Montreal-based sound artist Alexis O'Hara and Edmonton's filmmaker Trevor Anderson • June 26-28

AWA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP Braeside Presbyterian Church basement, N. door, 6 Bernard Dr, Bishop St, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert • For adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families • Meet Mondays including holidays, 7:30pm

BIG BIN EVENT www.edmonton.ca/reuse • To dispose of household items in good condition too large for regular garbage collection at no cost. Household hazardous waste items not accepted

BUDDHIST PRACTICE 10502-70 Ave, www.karmatashling.ca • Meditation and Buddhist practice: Wed, 7pm • DVD's and discussion: Fri, 7pm • Free, beginners welcome

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION Suite 800, 10045-111 St, 780.414.6311 • Family support drop-in group for individuals who are supporting an adult family member who is living with a mental illness • Every Wed, 6:30-8:30pm

CHANGE FOR CHILDREN Royal Glenora Club, Braemar Rm, 11160 River Valley Rd • AGM and spring brunch; entertainment by: Musicasur • Sun, June 28, 11am • \$40 each

CHESS CLUB 780.474.2318 • Learn to play chess; opportunities for all ages including classes, school programs and tournaments • rovingchessnuts@shaw.ca

CRITICAL MASS RIDE Starting at City Hall, ending at Gazebo Park • Last Fri every month • Fri, June 26, 5:30pm

EDMONTON ESPERANTO SOCIETY Rm 1812, 10025-102A Ave, 780.702.5117 • Fri, noon-3pm • vaughn@sewardconsulting.com

EDMONTON GHOST TOURS Meet in front of the Rescue Statue next to the Walterdale Playhouse, 10322-83 Ave, 780.289.2005, www.edmontonghosttours.com • Walk through Old Strathcona and hear true stories of ghosts and hauntings • Mon-Thu, until Aug 20, 9pm • \$5

"HOME" ENERGISING SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY FOR PASSIONATE LIVING Gameau/Ashbourne Assisted Living Place, 11148-84 Ave • Home: Blends music, drama, creativity and reflection on sacred texts to energise you for passionate living • Every Sun 3-5pm

M.A.D.E. IN EDMONTON/ALBERTA WOODWORKS Churchill Square, southeast corner • The 8th Annual Street Furniture Competition, use your imagination and construction skills to build custom furniture in an improvised industrial design competition. Part of the Works Festival • Sat, June 27, 10:30am-6pm; Sun, June 28 1-2pm (judging)

MOVIE AT THE MARKETPLACE Marketplace, Callingwood • Outdoor family movie night • Fri, June 26, 8:30pm, movie starts at 9:30pm • Free

PASTORS FOR PEACE Ukrainian Centre, 11018-97 St, 780.460.4373 • Caravan to Cuba: featuring speaker Jim Bouman and entertainment • July 4, 2pm • Donations; info contact Elsie Sansregret at 780.460.4373

REMEMBER STONEWALL U of A Corbett Hall, 112 St, 82 Ave • 40th Anniversary of Stonewall • Sun, June 28, 3-5pm

RIVERDALE NET ZERO ENERGY HOUSE 9926-87 St, www.riverdalenetzero.ca • Open for self-guided tours on Sat afternoons until the end of June, 1-4pm • Free

SHELL GUILTY! JUSTICE FOR THE OGONI 9 Stanley A. Milner Library 6 Fl, Churchill Sq • Film screening of Delta Force followed by a Q&A with MOSOP members • Sat, June 27, 2pm • Free, donations accepted

SILLY SUMMER PARADE Streets of Old Strathcona beginning at 78 Ave, 106 St heads east on 78 Ave to 104 St, north to Whyte Ave and then west to 108 St, continue down 108 St to 78 Ave, ending at Queen Alexandra School, 7730-106 St for the Picnic in the Park Event • Wed, July 1, noon

STONEWALL U of A, Corbett Hall, 112 St, 82 Ave • 40th anniversary of Stonewall • Sun, June 28, 3-5pm • Free

SUGARSWING DANCE CLUB Orange Hall, 10335-84 Ave, 780.604.7572 • Swing Dance at Sugar Foot Stomp: no experience needed, beginner lesson followed by dance every Sat • June 27, July 4, 8pm (door); www.sugarswing.com

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA Grant MacEwan College City Centre Campus, Rm 7-218 • The Humanitarian Crisis in Sri Lanka presented by The Alberta Tamil Community • Thu, June 25, 7-9pm

VOICE SEMINAR Eva O. Howard Theatre, King-sway Ave, 102 St • One Soul Thrust presents vocal training and vocal performance technique with Glenn Hughes with Alessandro Del Vecchio • Sat, June 27, 1:30pm • \$50/\$45 (Alberta Music Industry Association Member) at TIX on the Square

WINSPEAR TOURS Winspear Centre, corner of 99 Street and 102 Ave • Free guided summer tours; each tour begins at the main doors • Mon, 10am; July 7, 14, 21, 28 • Free, must reserve in advance at 780.401.2515

WOMEN IN BLACK In front of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil the 1st and 3rd Sat, 10-11am, each month, stand in silence for a world without violence

COMEDY

COMEDY FACTORY Gateway Entertainment Centre, 34 Ave, Calgary Trail • Thu, 8:30pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm • Tim Koslo; June 25-27 • Marty Hanenrg; July 3-4

COMIC STRIP Bourbon St, WEM, 780.483.5999 • Hit or Miss Mondays: Each Mon • Best of Edmonton Tuesdays: Each Tue • Christopher Titus; June 25-27

DRUID 11606 Jasper Ave, 780.710.2119 • Comedy Night: Hosted by Lars Callieou • Every Sun, 9pm

LAUGH SHOP 1105-6606 137 Ave, Londonderry Mall, 780.476.1010 • Wed-Thu 8pm; Fri-Sat 7:30pm and 9:45pm

QUEER

AFFIRM SUNNYBROOK-RED DEER Sunnybrook United Church, Red Deer, 403.347.6073 • Affirm welcome LGBTQ people and their friends, family, and allies meet the and Tue, 7pm, each month

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S COFFEE GROUP • A social group for bi-curious and bisexual women every and Tue of the month, 8pm • groups.yahoo.com/group/bwmedmonton

BOOTS BAR AND LOUNGE 10242-106 St, 780.423.5014, www.bootsbar.ca • 2nd Thu: Illusions Social Club • 3rd Wed: Edmonton O Society • 2nd Tue: Edmonton Rainbow Business Association • Every Fri: Philosophy Café • Fri and Sat DJ SeXXy Sean 10-3 • Long Weekend Sundays feature the Stardust Lounge with Miss Bianca and Vanity Fair

BUDDYS NITE CLUB 11725B Jasper Ave, 780.488.7736 • DJ Dust 'n' Time; Mon 9pm • DJ Arrow Chaser; Tue 9pm • DJ Dust 'n' Time; Wed 9pm; no cover before 10pm • DJ Arrow Chaser; Fri 8pm; no cover before 10pm • DJ Earth Shiver 'n' Quake; Sat 8pm; no cover before 10pm • DJ Bobby Beatz; Sun 9pm • Drag Queen Performance Show; Sun; no cover before 10pm

EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT) Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 St • A group of older gay men and their admirers who have common interests meet the and Sun, 2:30pm, most months for a social period, short meeting and guest speaker, discussion panel or potluck supper. Special interest groups meet for other social activities throughout the month. E: edmontonpt@yahoo.ca, www.primetimersww.org/edmonton

GLBT SPORTS AND RECREATION www.teamedmonton.ca • Women's Drop-In Recreational Badminton; Oliver School Gym, 10227-118 St, 780.465.3620; Wed, 6-7:30pm • Bootcamp; Lynnwood Elementary School at 15451-84 Ave; Mon, 7-8:15pm; bootcamp@teamedmonton.ca • Bowling: Gateway Lanes, 100, 3414 Gateway Blvd; Sat, 5-7pm; bowling@teamedmonton.ca • Curling: Mon, 7:15-9:15pm; Granite Curling Club; 780.463.5942 • Running: Sun, Tue, Thu; running@teamedmonton.ca • Swimming: NAIT pool, 11762-106 St; Tue, 8-9pm, Thu, 7:30-8:30pm; swimming@teamedmonton.ca • Volleyball: Tue Recreational: Mother Teresa Elementary School at 9008-105A, 8-10pm; Thu intermediate: Amiskiwacy Academy, 101 Airport Rd, 8-10pm; recvolleyball@teamedmonton.ca; volleyball@teamedmonton.ca • YOGA (Hatha): Free Yoga every Sun, 2-3:30pm; Korezone Fitness, 203, 10575-115 St, yoga@teamedmonton.ca

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB: CROSSDRESSERS 780.387.3343 • meet monthly • For info go to groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton_illusions/

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu each month (fall/winter terms): Speakers Series. Contact Kris (kwells@ualberta.ca)

LIVING POSITIVE 404, 10408-124 St, www.edmlivingpositive.ca, 1.877.975.9448/780.488.5768 • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Tue, 7-9pm: Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

MADELINE SANAM FOUNDATION Faculté St. Jean, Rm 3-18, 780.490.7332 • Program for HIV-AID'S prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • 3rd and 4th Sat, 9am-5pm each month • Free (member)/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm • Recreation-al/competitive swimming. Socializing after practices • Every Tue, Thu

PLAY NIGHTCLUB 10220-103 St, www.play-nightclub.ca • Open Thu, Fri, Sat • The first bar for the queer community to open in a decade with DJs Alex Brown and Eddie Toonflash

PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON 9540-111 Ave, 780.488.3234, www.pridecentreofedmonton.org • Open Tue-Fri 1-10pm, Sat 2-6:30pm • LGBT Seniors Drop-in: Every Tue/Thu, 2-4pm • CA: Thu (7pm) • Suit Up and Show Up: AA big book study group every Sat, noon • Youth Understanding Youth: Up to 25 years, support and social group every Sat, 7-9pm; yuy@shaw.ca • Womonspace: Board meeting 1st Sun every month, 10:30am-12:30pm • Trans Education/Support Group: Meet the 1st and 3rd Sun, 2-4pm, every month; www.albertatrans.org • Men Talking with Pride: Sun 7pm; facilitator: Rob Wells robwells780@hotmail.com • HIV Support Group: 2nd Mon every month, 7pm • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning (TTIQ) Alliance; Support meeting 2nd Tue every month, 7:30pm • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning: Education, advocacy and support for men, women and youth • Free short-term, solution-focused drop-in counseling; Wed, 7-10pm • YouthSpace: drop-in for LGBTQ for youth up to 25; Tue-Sat, 3-7pm

PRISM BAR 10524-101 St, 780.990.0038 • Wed: Free Pool; Karaoke, 9pm-midnight • Thu: Prism Pool League; 7-11:30pm • Fri: Steak Nites; 5-9pm; DJ at 9:30pm

ROBERTSON-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH 10209-123 St, 780.482.1587 • Soul OUTing: an LGBT-focused alternative worship • 2nd Sun every month, 7pm; worship Sun, 10:30am; people of all sexual orientations welcome. A LGBT monthly book club and film night. E: jravenscroft@rwuc.org

ST PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 11526-76 Ave, 780.436.1555 • People of all sexual orientations are welcome • Every Sun (10am worship)

WOMONSPACE 780.482.1794, www.womonspace.ca, womonspace@gmail.com • A Non-profit lesbian social organization for Edmonton and surrounding area. Monthly activities, newsletter, reduced rates included with membership. Confidentiality assured • Hellenic Hall, 10450-116 St

WOODYS 11723 Jasper Ave, 780.488.6557 • Karaoke with Nathan; Mon 8pm • Martini Mondays; 3pm • You Don't Know Game Show with Patrick and Nathan; Thu 9pm • Long Island Iced Tea; Thu 3pm • Karaoke with Morgan; Wed 7pm • Karaoke with Kevin; Sun 8pm

YOUTH UNDERSTANDING YOUTH www.yuyedm.ca • Meets every Sat, 7-9pm • Contact Scott for info email: info@yuyedm.ca, T: 780-248-1971

SPECIAL EVENTS

ARDEN THEATRE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA Arden Theatre, St. Albert, 780.459.1542 • Colin James and the Little Big Band followed by an outdoor garden party with entertainment by Souljah Fyah • \$125 available at the Arden box office, TicketMaster • Fri, June 26

BAD GIRLS-JANE AUSTEN GALA U of A, 780.488.4932, mmasson@shaw.ca • Presentations: *The Bride from Bristol*; *Women's Clothing during the Regency*; *Fools, Flirts and Floozies*; *Lady Susan (the play)*; *Who's a Bad Girl Then* • June 27 • \$45

CANADA DAY CELEBRATIONS www.edmontoncelebratecanada.ca; 780.496.8400 • Firework displays begin at 10:45pm

SNAP GALA-LOVE THOSE CLOTHES YOU WEAR SNAP, 10309 97 St, 780.423.1492, www.snapartists.com • Fundraising event including a fashion show, live auction, silent auction of hand-printed and hand-crafted clothing items, accessories, and housewares. There will be hors d'oeuvres, champagne, and music • June 27, 7pm-midnight • \$25 (adv)/\$30 (door); funds to SNAP's education programs

SPECIAL OLYMPICS www.specialolympics.ab.ca, 780.460.7009 • 2009 Summer Games celebrating athletes with disabilities • June 26-28

SPRUCE GROVE'S CANADA DAY STREET PERFORMER FESTIVAL Spruce Grove Composite High School Sports Field, 1000 Calahoo Rd, 780.962.7616; www.sprucegrove.org/celebrate • June 30-July 1 • Vaudeville Variety Show at 7pm, \$5 Community BBQ at 5-8pm; Tue, June 30 • \$2 Pancake Breakfast; main-stage: Polyjesters at 8pm, Gord Bamford at 9:30pm; Fireworks at 11pm; Wed, July 1

STREET PERFORMERS FESTIVAL Sir Winston Churchill Sq, www.edmontonstreetfest.com • Featuring street acts, rovers, interactive comedy characters, kids' activities, live music and more • July 3-12

UKRAINIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE VILLAGE VINTAGE DAY Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, 780.662.3640; www.ukrainianvillage.ca • Especially for car lovers to see vintage cars, musicians, and special historic activities throughout the day • June 27

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TOP 30 FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 25, 2009

1. Bob Dylan - Together Through Life (columbia)
2. Steve Earle - Townes (new west)
3. Neil Young - Fork In The Road (reprise)
4. Gurf Morix - Last Exit To Happyland (gurf morix)
5. Neko Case - Middle Cyclone (anti)
6. Jim Byrnes - My Walking Stick (black hen)
7. Grizzly Bear - Veckatimest (warp)
8. Reverie Sound Review - S/T (boompa)
9. Dave Alvin - And The Guilty Women (yep roc)
10. Sonic Youth - The Eternal (matador)
11. The Decemberists - The Hazards Of Love (capitol)
12. Joel Plaskett - Three (maplemusic)
13. Patrick Watson - Wooden Times (secret city)
14. Mos Def - The Ecstatic (downtown)
15. Hayden - The Place Where We Lived (hardwood)
16. JJ Cale - Roll On (rounder)
17. Elvis Costello - Secret, Profane & Sugarcane (hear)
18. Rancid - Let The Dominos Fall (epitaph)
19. Mastodon - Crack The Skye (reprise)
20. Dirty Projectors - Bitte Orca (domino)
21. Wayne Hancock - Viper Of Melody (bloodshot)
22. Pink Mountaintops - Outside Love (jagjaguwar)
23. John Doe & The Sadies - Country Club (outside)
24. Booker T - Potato Hole (anti)
25. St. Vincent - Actor (4ad)
26. Leonard Cohen - Live In London (columbia)
27. Justin Townes Earle - Midnight At The Movies (bloodshot)
28. Ruthie Foster - Truth (blue corn)
29. Iron & Wine - Around The Well (sub pop)
30. Dog Day - Concentration (outside)

WILCO WILCO (THE ALBUM)

Nonesuch Records will release Wilco's seventh studio recording, the aptly titled Wilco (the album), on June 30th. The new offering by the Chicago sextet features, among other things, eleven new songs, a duet with Canadian songwriter/vocalist Leslie Feist and a camel named Alfred as its cover star.



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Poz sex-positive

The music is loud. A continuous stream of great songs keeps you on the dance floor. Moving closer all night is a guy you are totally attracted to. Your eyes lock a few times and then you both explode in giddy shy smiles. You turn away and hope your boner dies down. It is near the end of the night, and by now you and the guy are dancing close, brushing up against each other. Soon his hands are on your body. You can smell his clean skin. His cool breath is on your sweaty neck. He tells you that he wants to take you home. You lean in close. His chest meets yours. "I would love to," you say. You kiss.

For the next song you smile at each other and dance as you finish your drink. You can tell there's something he wants to say. You wait in anticipation. The sexual chemistry between you is so much you think that if you were a different type of guy you would take him into a washroom stall right now. You feel his breath again on your neck. Your body is moving perfectly with the

music. He seems a bit hesitant. He opens his mouth and you are expecting him to say that he has a boyfriend or his place is mess. Instead he says, "I should let you know—I have HIV."

Do you pull him close, whisper seductively in his ear, "I always play safe," and then make your way together to the door? Or do you try to suppress a thick gulp as your mind rushes to find a "nice" way out of the situation?

A few weeks ago I was sitting around a table taking to friends about hookups and one-night stands. We all agreed it is best to start finding out about a person before you take them home. One guy readily admitted that if someone disclosed they were HIV+ he would no longer be interested in sleeping with him. This guy who said this is not a bad guy, he's a regular good guy who thought his self-protective stance was informed. The fact is if you both protect

yourselves there is no danger to you or the person living with HIV in having sex.

We have been taught to protect ourselves against HIV, but along the way we've forgotten that nothing is ever just one thing. Human Immunodeficiency Virus does not live in isolation. It is contained in human bodies, human bodies we sometimes want to fuck, human bodies we should not be afraid of, human bodies we should embrace if we want to.

A quarter-century into the AIDS crisis people living with HIV lead long, healthy lives. While living with HIV may mean a cocktail of drugs everyday with nasty side affects, it can also mean a satisfying and varied sex life. While there still is no cure for HIV, the reality of living with the virus has gone from rapidly progressing into AIDS and dying soon after, to now being a chronic, manageable disease. So while science may have progressed to a point to better serve people living with HIV, our culture and government, it could be easily argued, has not.

QUEER MONTON
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ARTIST TO ARTIST

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FREE-FREE-FREE-FREE-FREE

ARTIST/NON PROFIT CLASSIFIEDS

Need a volunteer? Forming an acting troupe? Want someone to jam with? Place up to 20 words FREE, providing the ad is non-profit. Ads of more than 20 words subject to regular price or cruel editing. Free ads must be submitted in writing, in person or by fax. Free ads will run for four weeks, if you want to renew or cancel please phone Glenys at 780.426.1996/fax 780.426.2889/e-m office@vuwweekly.com or drop it off at 10303-108 St. Deadline is noon the Tuesday before publication. Placement will depend upon available space

Allied Arts Council, Spruce Grove invites Alberta artists to submit a proposal as feature artist for a solo/group show at the Spruce Grove Art Gallery in 2010. Deadline: June 30. For more info call 780.962.0664

Edmonton Arts Council
Individual Artist Project Grant
Deadline: July 1.

For info, go to <http://www.edmontonarts.ab.ca/grants/individual.html>; T: 780.424.2787

Call to Artists - West Edmonton Skateboard Park Artwork Competition are requesting proposals for artworks depicting the skateboard culture, and will be installed at the West Edmonton Skateboard Park, Callington District Park, 178 St, 69 Ave. Deadline July 31; T: 780.944.5450 E: susan.mcunier@edmonton.ca

Call for submissions of unique, hand-crafted or printed wearable art for SNAP's Love Those Clothes You Wear silent auction fundraising gala and fashion show on June 27

Whyte Avenue Art Walk: July 10-12, outdoor visual art festival is seeking volunteers to assist artists, report security concerns and provide orientation and promotion to the public. 10am-5pm daily (1/2 day shifts available). Youth volunteers welcome. Contact Kim at The Paint Spot 780.432.0240 or or info@paintspot.ca

MUSICIANS

Wanted: experienced local bands to play live. Good opportunity to make money. All musical styles welcome. call Veronica 780 690 1353

Love Jasper National Park? Play guitar? Keys? Banjo? Fiddle? Join McCoy Simonson's Rocky Mountain Outfit. E: McCoy at mccoysimonson@soniclandscape.ca for info

A working original top 40 trio requires a bass player. Looking for a professional with a marketable image. Serious inquiries only. Call Roy at 780.418.2214

Drummer and Bass player required for original recording project. Infl: Beatles, Dylan, Neil Young, Mark Knopfler, U2, Steve Earle. South-side rehearsal space, equipment on site. Byron Old School Sound: 780.297.7289

WANTED: JAMMERS for open public monthly jam on the second Sunday of the month at 9119-128A Ave. Rock, country & old time music. Ph. 780.973.5593, randyglen@JumpUpDj.com

VOLUNTEER

VOLUNTEER-FREEWILL SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, June 30-July 26, outdoor theatre for Front-of-House during this summer's productions of Titus Andronicus and Comedy of Errors. Info: Cassandra at 780.425.8086, volunteer@freewillshakespeare.com

Volunteers Needed for the Great White North Triathlon. Positions available as marshals for the bike and run course, transition, lifeguards, water stations, security, medical, media liaison etc. T: 780.478.1388 or E: lwiliam@telus.net

Volunteer website for youth 14-24 years old. www.youthvolunteer.ca

OLD STRATHCONA YOUTH SOCIETY IS LOOKING FOR DONATIONS OF MEN'S AND BOYS' CLOTHING, AS WELL AS ART AND MUSIC SUPPLIES. 780-496-5947 NKENNEDY@OSYS.CA

Right now in Canada, a person living with HIV is legally obligated to inform a potential sex partner that they are living with HIV. Not doing so, regardless of what sexually transpires, can result in the person living with HIV being charged with aggravated sexual assault to attempted murder (even if the potential partner is not infected and possibly even if the person living with HIV was not aware of their HIV status at the time). In cases where the sex partner is infected with HIV and subsequently dies, the person living with HIV can be charged with first-degree murder.

The Canadian government is by far one of the most bullish and aggressive countries in its policing of people living with HIV. For example, the UN takes a more prosaic approach, suggesting only in cases where HIV transmission actually occurred and the person with HIV intentionally infected someone should a person be criminally charged. Last week Justice Edwin Cameron from South Africa was quoted in the *Toronto Star* as saying, "Canada's wide approach to exposure offences is sending out a terribly retrograde message to other countries,

especially on my own continent, in Africa." For people living with the virus, Canada's criminalization of HIV is just a curb stomp blow to the already crippling stigma related to HIV. Last year the publishers of Xtra.ca were involved in a forum that looked at HIV disclosure and the law. At the event Derek Yee, a man living with HIV stated, "I'm branded as a criminal... now they tell me my body is a weapon."

So back to the club—the pulsating beat, the dangling offer. Did you decide what you are going to do? Does our culture's lack of openness in dealing with HIV impact whether you go home with the guy? Does society's ignorance about what it is to be living with HIV play a part in your knowledge of what is safe and what isn't? Does having a law in place reduce the responsibility you need to take for yourself? Should the state ever police what goes on in a bedroom between two consenting adults?

Fear and ignorance rob people of experiences and create space for those in power to oppress. As sexual minorities we have an opportunity to make choices for ourselves. Get informed. Have fun. ♡

Sobey's Symphony Under the Sky (Sept 4-7): looking for volunteers. www.edmontonsymphony.com to print volunteer application or contact Ashton Ehnes T: 780.401.2522, E: ashton.ehnes@winspearcentre.com for info

Second Chance Animal Rescue Society (SCARS) Join Andrea or Alison on Global TV at 9:45am every Saturday, where they will have many adorable and adoptable puppies who are looking for a new home

Guerrilla Gardening need volunteers. E: their-bangreening@gmail.com, T: 780.432.6181 for info. Facebook: <http://edmontongg.blogspot.com>

Mill Woods Family Resource Centre / Board Recruiting 2009. To learn more about our agency, visit us at: www.mwfr.org

Edmonton Bicycle Commuters (EBC) is looking for people to help at the shop or with other tasks. Contact: info@edmontonbikes.ca

Volunteers needed to "make fun" at the Edmonton International Street Performers Festival running July 3-12; apply online at www.edmonton-streetfest.com; E: volunteer@edmontonstreetfest.com; T: Liz Allison-Jorde 780.425.5162. Volunteers must be a minimum of 14 yrs old

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Average Jane

Dear Readers:

I've known people who have sex for money, have sex as a hobby, write about (or perform about or do art about or teach about) sex as an avocation and still have enough interest and energy left over to have the occasional bit of relaxing off-line sex at home with a partner when nobody's watching or reading along. But I am not one of them. I get bored. There was a play about vibrators playing here recently and everyone asked me but I was all, "Eh, I'd rather see Up." I like to cook and read and watch shows about things that have as little to do with (my) real life as possible—high fashion, for instance, the nuttier the better. I like it when the models wear their dresses upside-down and have monkey-fur eyebrows and a teapot on their head. You don't?

ALT. SEX
altsex@vuwweekly.com

Andrea Nemerson

So ... I'm a huge fan of *Project Runway* and a lesser one of its lesser successor, *The Fashion Show*. Every season, though, there's some kind of challenge involving "real women" and, while it's fun to see the contestants, used to dressing compliant stick insects, wrestle with a mouthy client who dares to voice her own, often scandalously *apres garde* opinions, it's appalling to hear what the designers have to say about the non-model bodies. Faced with the task of dressing a modeling agency admin instead of the expected model, one of the *Fashion Show* wannabes pouted, "She's very normal. I don't do normal."

Well too bad for you, darling! Let us return the favour!

So imagine my glee upon discovering a recent study which finds that regular men (as opposed to fashion designers of any

gender or sexual preference) not only do average women, they vastly prefer us. I knew it! All these years of assuring women that jutting hipbones and sunken chests are not only not required to attract guys, they aren't even preferred, and now I have at least this one study to back me up.

This isn't about the "something to hang onto" hypothesis, although I do think that men in general do prefer some padding on those they plan to bump up against, and not only to avoid all the bruising. Men who are attracted to women tend to be attracted to women, and women have boobs and butts and that cunning part in between, where it gets smaller.

You've probably heard about the alleged universally preferred waist-hip ratio: it's 0.7. This shows up constantly in popular-science-y articles about men's hard-wired preference for female bodies that signal youth, good health and fertility (they also like symmetry, even skin tone and teeth), and depresses female readers who wonder if they measure up. Some researchers in Australia decided to take a closer look,

and recruited a bunch of guys to rate line drawings of female torsos for attractiveness. From the *New Scientist* article:

The work, by Rob Brooks at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, and colleagues, suggests that the popular notion that a waist-hip ratio of 0.7 is the most attractive only holds if the rest of the body is average.

"The orthodoxy says that you will be attractive with a certain waist-hip ratio no matter how the rest of your body varies. Our study shows this is not the case," says [researcher] Brooks. "The men showed a preference for women with a waist-hip ratio of 0.7, but only if they had an average-sized waist, hips and shoulders."

When compared with groups of real women, including *Playboy* centerfolds, Australian escorts advertising on the Internet and average Australian women between the ages of 25 and 44, the latter group most closely matched the preferred body shape.

A win for the average Sheila. Isn't this

heartening? Of course women who are substantially smaller or larger than average can still find plenty of ammunition here with which to wound themselves (the men liked average women, after all), and we don't know for a fact that it applies to non-Aussie men. Even so, it's something to remember when the heart sinks and the self-loathing rises upon looking in the mirror and failing, once again, to see Kate Moss pouting back at us. Suck it, Kate! Go eat some crisps.

In other heartening news, the editor of *British Vogue* put fashion designers on notice that she would no longer publish photos of ultra-emaciated models so they'd better start sending larger clothes. Apparently the samples have been arriving at the magazines in ever-tinier sizes, until even the models we're used to seeing, who are about 5'10" and 100 – 125 pounds, can't fit into them. Not that the average, size 14 Australian torso is going to be able to squeeze into those Valentinos, but at least it's a start.

Love, Andrea

VUEWEEKLY

CONTEST RULES:

Unless otherwise specified, the following will apply:

- the winner must be 18 or older.

- prize must be accepted as awarded.

- no one may enter any contest more than once.

- you may only win once every 60 days.

- Vue Weekly reserves the right to exclude anyone from our contests.

- no staff, sponsors or members of their immediate families may enter.

- the personal information of those who enter will not be sold but may be provided to contest sponsors.

- the chances of winning depend on the number of entries received.

- by entering, entrants consent to the use of their names by Vue Weekly for publicity.

- Vue Weekly is not responsible for prizes unclaimed after 15 days.

- by entering with an email address one authorizes oneself to be added to FIRSTREAD!

VOLUNTEER

The Carrot needs volunteer barristas for weekly or biweekly shifts (training provided). Volunteer host to introduce Friday night's musical acts. Volunteer cleaners (weekly or biweekly cleaning). If any of these jobs appeal to you contact Irene at 780.471.1580, info@artsontheave.org

Do you love the ARTS? Join us and be a part of North America's LARGEST Outdoor FREE Art & Design Festival! Volunteer! Download your application at www.theworks.ab.ca

Volunteer drivers and kitchen help urgently needed. If you're available weekdays, 10am-1pm call Meals on Wheels. 780.429.2020

Volunteer with your Pet, The Chimo Animal Assisted Therapy Project uses animals in therapy sessions with trained therapists to help the clients achieve specific goals. Info: www.chimoproject.ca. E: volunteer@chimoproject.ca or T: 780.452.2452

CANADIAN LIVER FOUNDATION is looking for enthusiastic volunteers for presentations and special events. Call Carmen at 780.444.1547

The Support Network: Volunteer today to be a Distress Line Listener. Apply on line at: www.thesupportnetwork.com or call 780.732.6648

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SERVICES

Have you been affected by another person's sexual behaviour? S-Anon is a 12-Step fellowship for the family members and friends of sex addicts. Call 780.988.4412 for Edmonton area meeting locations and information, or visit www.sanon.org

SACE—Public Education Program: Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (www.sace.ab.ca) provides crisis intervention, info, counseling, public education. T: 780.423.4102/F: 780.421.8734/E: info@sace.ab.ca; www.sace.ab.ca/24 Hour Crisis Line: 780.423.4121

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS HELP LINE 24 Hours a Day—7 Days a Week If you want to stop using, we can help. Local: 780.421.4429 Toll free: 1.877.463.3537

Are you an International Medical Graduate seeking licensure? The Alberta International Medical Graduates Association is here to help. Support, study groups, volunteer opportunities—all while creating change for tomorrow. www.aimga.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association, www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca Education Program offer workshops to give skills to intervene with people who may be at risk for suicide. Follow the links to ASIST or call 780.414.6300

Jewish Family Services Edmonton/TASIS (Transforming Acculturative Stress Into Success): A free program aimed at minimizing culture shock and displacement for trained professional immigrant women. T: Svetlana 780.454.1194; E: community@jfsce.org

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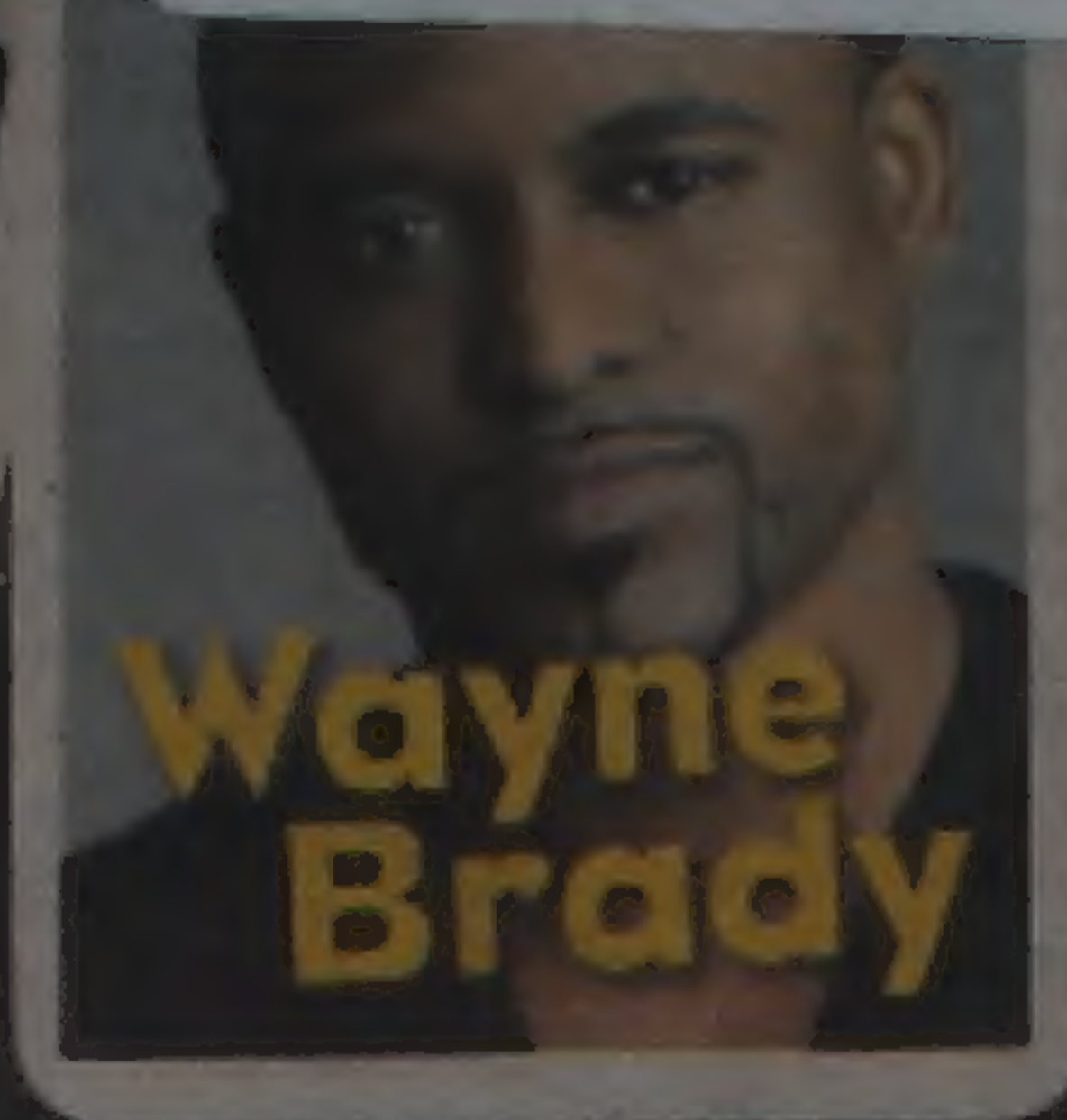
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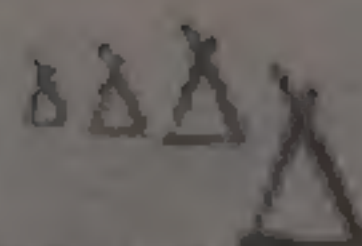


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